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The

MARRIAGE GAME

A COMEDY IN
THREE ACTS *by*

ANNE CRAWFORD FLEXNER

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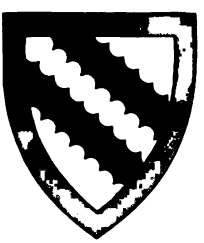

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Eleanor

from Mother.

Oct 4, 1931.

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THE MARRIAGE GAME

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THE MARRIAGE GAME

A Comedy in Three Acts, by
ANNE CRAWFORD FLEXNER

NEW YORK
B. W. HUEBSCH
MCMXVI

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To

THE AMERICAN HUSBAND

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CHARACTERS

NEVIL INGRAHAM
CHARLIE FROST
JIM PACKARD
TOM UPDEGRAFF, *Ingraham's brother-in-law*
JENKS
ASSISTANT STEWARD
RACIE UPDEGRAFF, *Ingraham's sister*
MRS. FROST
MRS. PACKARD
MRS. OLIVER

The action takes place within twenty-four hours, on board Ingraham's yacht.

ACT I

Deck of Ingraham's yacht, "The Bachelor." (An afternoon in June.)

ACT II

The saloon of "The Bachelor." (Several hours later.)

ACT III

"The Bachelor," New London Harbour. (Early next morning.)

TIME: The Present.

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Produced at the COMEDY THEATRE, NEW YORK, *on October 29th, 1913, with the following cast:*

NEVIL INGRAHAM . .	Orrin Johnson
CHARLIE FROST . . .	William Sampson
JIM PACKARD . . .	George W. Howard
TOM UPDEGRAFF . .	Charles Trobridge
JENKS	Fred Mosley
ASSISTANT STEWARD .	Walter Grey
RACIE UPDEGRAFF . .	Vivian Martin
MRS. FROST	Josephine Lovett
MRS. PACKARD . . .	Alison Skipworth
MRS. OLIVER . . .	Alexandra Carlisle

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THE MARRIAGE GAME

ACT I

SCENE: *Deck of Ingraham's yacht The Bachelor, which is lying at the pier of the New York Yacht Club at foot of East 23d Street. The deck is glistening white and is seen from the second mast to the stern. To the Right of the mast is the roof of a small skylight with a cushioned seat. To the Left a companionway with the hood pushed back, leading to the saloon below. Behind this is the steering-wheel and the stern rail of the boat, with the United States Yacht Club's ensign flying from the staff. On the starboard side is a launch, suspended from the davits; just forward of that is the owner's gangway. Life-preservers, with the yacht's name "The Bachelor" in black lettering on a white ground, are in evidence. There is a group of wicker chairs with cushions of brilliant chintz down Left, and a wicker table on which are some books and flowers.*

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All the brass fittings of the deck glitter in the sunlight, which is that of a warm afternoon in June. A back-drop of the East River, with white gulls skimming against the blue.

DISCOVERED AT RISE: JENKS *who is arranging the rugs and cushions in the deck-chairs, books and flowers on table R. C. and busying himself about the deck, humming aloud the air "I'm going to be a honeymoon girl, With my husband by my side"—Enter* ASST. STEWARD, *a trim young cockney, who carries three huge flower-boxes tied with wide ribbons. Both wear white duck uniforms and white sneakers.*

ASST. STEWARD

[*Holding boxes up.*] More flowers! My guess is—lidies aboard!

[*Putting boxes on table, knocks a box of candy on to deck.*]

JENKS

You ain't paid fer guessin'— Clean up that mess. . . .

ASST. STEWARD

[*Taking a cloth out of his pocket and rubbing the deck as he talks.*] Me first idea wuz a

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bachelor-cruise. Mr. Ingraham's give orders for a h'extry supply of cigars, and old port *with* the champagne, that pints ter gentlemen.

[*Throws candy overboard.*]

JENKS

Not pints, quarts!

ASST. STEWARD

But h'all this confectionery, an' new novels, an' flowers! You can take it from me that spells lidies!

JENKS

Oh, dry up!

ASST. STEWARD

[*With a knowing wink.*] Not that I ain't seen lidies on a bachelor-cruise afore now! H'as for *flowers*, I've seen staterooms fair smothered in 'em. [*Lowers his voice.*] I seen a berth once, as was jist a bed of wiolets!

JENKS

[*Witheringly.*] You seen enough, most likely, when you was among them Britishers! There's heaps of boats right here in the Sound *I* wouldn't ship with, knowin' what goes on in 'em.

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But it's a pleasure to sail under a decent, god-fearin' man like Mr. Ingraham, and you can take it from *me* that, if this here's a bachelor-cruise, there'll be *no females aboard.*

ASST. STEWARD

[*Very sly.*] Not when we leaves port perhaps. You can't never tell *what* may 'appen to you in strynge waters!

JENKS

Mr. Ingraham don't navigate no strange waters, you darned idjit! [*A* SAILOR *carrying a steamer-trunk on his shoulder, and a hat-trunk in his hand, enters R.*] Where you goin' with that trunk? Baggage to the forward hatchway! Don't set it down! [*To* ASST. STEWARD.] Here, you!

ASST. STEWARD

[*Takes hat-trunk.*] If that ain't a female! [*Reading name.*] "Missis Up-giraffe?"

JENKS

"Updegraff." It's Mr. Ingraham's sister. We always have good weather when Miss Racie's aboard! Take 'em to stateroom No. 1, and look sharp about the paint.

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[*As the* ASST. STEWARD *exits forward Right,* INGRAHAM, *dressed for yachting, runs up the companionway and steps on the deck. He looks at the watch he has in his hand, and is in radiant high spirits.*]

INGRAHAM

Whose luggage was that, Jenks?

JENKS

[*Saluting.*] Mrs. Updegraff's, sir.

INGRAHAM

[*Returns his watch to his pocket, after glancing at it.*] And *Mr.* Updegraff's?

JENKS

[*Taken aback.*] There was a *trunk,* sir. Ain't their luggage together?

INGRAHAM

No, it's not. It couldn't be, for the simple reason that neither one of 'em knows the other one's coming. It's a little surprise I'm planning, Jenks.

JENKS

It's a long time since Miss Racie and Mr. Tom's been out with us, sir. They spent their honey-

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moon on this boat, if you'll rec'lect, sir, cruising. Just two years ago this week it was, sir.

INGRAHAM

Yes, time the young people were having another, eh, Jenks? So I planned this cruise for their second honeymoon.

JENKS

I see, sir! Beggin' your pardon, sir, I never heard of any kind of a honeymoon where one party didn't know the other one wuz a comin', sir!

INGRAHAM

I got the idea from a newspaper clipping. [*Feeling in his vest pocket, stops suddenly.*] The cards! I forgot to give you the cards for the staterooms. [*Takes cards from vest pocket and hands them one at a time to* JENKS.] Put Mr. and Mrs. Frost in No. 2; Mr. and Mrs. Packard in No. 3—if Mr. Packard, who's out of town, gets back in time—Miss Racie and Mr. Tom in No. 1 of course—and, I say, Jenks—[*As* JENKS *turns away with cards.*] I hope you're well stocked with ice and everything?

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JENKS

Yes, sir, I am, sir.

INGRAHAM

Because I'll have no running ashore after we start. I've given the skipper orders not to put in to any port for at least three days.

JENKS

That's just what *they* done, Miss Racie and Mr. Tom, sir—two years ago. *They* never wanted to go ashore neither! They give orders, too, not to put into *any* port, they wuz so afraid of gittin' a letter or a telegram, a-callin' of 'em back! That wuz a sure enough honeymoon, sir!

INGRAHAM

So'll this be!

JENKS

[*Doubtfully, looking at the cards he holds.*] It might be, sir, ef we wuz all *young* married couples, sir. But we ain't. Old stagers like Mr. and Mrs. Frost and Mr. and Mrs. Packard—[*Holds up two of the cards.*] 'll want to go ashore at New London an' Woods Hole an' Marblehead, to get mail an' newspapers, sir. You'll see, sir!

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[*Noise of launch.*] The launch! here comes some of the party, now, sir. [*Goes to rail.*] Mr. Updegraff, and—by hisself, sir.

INGRAHAM

S-sh! Not a word about Miss Racie—

[*Goes to rail as* TOM *comes up gangway. As he steps on deck* JENKS *goes down into boat and returns with* TOM'S *bag, and a telegram.*]

TOM

Hello, Inky! [*Shakes hands.*]

INGRAHAM

Hello, Tom! You're a nice brother-in-law, *you* are! I've had the devil of a time reaching you! Don't you ever go *home?*

TOM

I slept at the Club, and your note followed me there. I pitched some things into a bag—and came along! Other fellows all here?

INGRAHAM

Not all, not yet. You didn't go home, then?

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TOM

I sent Racie a wire that I'd be out of town. Corking idea of yours, old man. Hope we're going to the North Pole!

INGRAHAM

[*Disturbed.*] As far as that?

TOM

Oh, I'd like to get clean off for awhile.

INGRAHAM

[*Pause.*] I don't want to pry, but what's up with you and Racie, Tom?

TOM

Oh nothing—everything. What's the use? When things get all snarled up, *I* believe in clearing right out—and giving them a chance to unsnarl!

INGRAHAM

Sometimes that only snarls 'em tighter. Have you had a straight talk with Racie?

TOM

My dear fellow, what chance have I had? When I got back from that little trip with the

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boys, I found Racie completely upset. Some kind friend had been filling her up with notions about fishing trips and she wanted me to promise I'd never go on another. Of course, I refused. Tears and accusations that I didn't love her. As luck would have it I'd gone off and forgotten all about our second anniversary. Things were in such a muddle that I moved round to the Club. Meanwhile, a bachelor cruise just suits my book, old man! [*Rises and slaps* INKY *on shoulder.*]

INGRAHAM

H'm, yes—! [*Consults watch.*] I wish I'd known you were stopping at the Club. That duffer Jenks has just been telling me he's all out of Egyptian Deities. You know Jim Packard doesn't smoke any other kind. *Would* you mind just hiking up to the Club in a taxi and bringing back a few dozen boxes? I haven't got a man I can spare—Do you mind?

TOM

Not a bit! [*Going to gangway.*] I'd be delighted.

INGRAHAM

[*Calling off.*] Jenks.

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JENKS

[*Reappears R.*] Yes, sir.

INGRAHAM

Mr. Updegraff's going back in the launch.

JENKS

Aye, aye, sir.

INGRAHAM

It's awfully good of you, old man. I'd go myself, but—

TOM

Nonsense! You've got to be here when the other fellows come. [*Goes over the side.*] I'll be back in twenty minutes—Egyptian Deities and all! [*Noise of launch.*]

JENKS

[*Hands telegram.*] Here's a telegram came with the launch for you, sir. [INGRAHAM *takes and opens it.*] Begging your pardon, sir, but we've a thousand Egyptian Deities, below.

[*Sounds of launch departing.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Opening telegram.*] I know it, Jenks. But I don't want Mr. Tom here when Miss Racie

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comes. By George!—[*Glances at telegram.*] If that's not Jim Packard all over! [*Reads*]: "Just back from fishing-trip. Found your wire at Club. Sure I'll come. *Am bringing friend.* Jim." A friend—but we've no room! [*Leaps to rail.*] Hi there! Tom!

JENKS

[*Shouts.*] Launch, ahoy!

INGRAHAM

No good, they don't hear us. [*Goes to bench and comes back with megaphone.*] [*Speaks through it.*] Launch ahoy! Tom-m-m!

JENKS

They hear, sir.

VOICE

[*From off faintly.*] Heigh!

INGRAHAM

[*Thro' megaphone.*] Hi! Tom! See Jim Packard at the Club! Tell him *not* to bring his friend. We've no room. Do you get me—no room for friend!

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VOICE

[*Off, very faint.*] All right. I get you.

INGRAHAM

[*Same.*] On your way! [*Lowers megaphone.*] [*To* JENKS.] Ten to one he won't find him. [*Looks at telegram again.*] A friend, —an odd man, whom he'll expect to share his stateroom!

JENKS

[*Bewildered.*] But *Mrs.* Packard, sir?

INGRAHAM

Precisely, Jenks! You have put your finger on the difficulty. Mr. Packard evidently thinks it's a man's party where one or two more won't make any difference.

JENKS

Yes, sir. I see, sir. How about a hammock on deck, sir?

INGRAHAM

With the mosquitoes what they are now?

JENKS

Right, sir. [*Reflectively.*] There's the sofa in your stateroom, that could be made into a bunk for Mr. Packard's friend. . . .

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INGRAHAM

[*Feelingly.*] Me take him? I'd as lief have a bear as a man sleep in my room with me!

[*Walks about.*]

JENKS

Shall I go ashore and 'phone Mr. Packard's house, sir? [*Sound of launch coming back.*]

INGRAHAM

Oh no, he seldom goes there. Make up the sofa in my stateroom—in case Mr. Tom doesn't catch him. [*Sounds of launch.*]

JENKS

Aye, aye, sir. [*Going towards railing.*] Beg pardon, sir, here come Mr. and Mrs. Frost.

[*Stands at salute by gangway and afterwards takes charge of luggage, two suit-cases, and exits Right.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Walking up stage as the head of* MRS. FROST, *followed by* FROST, *appears above the gangway.*] Well! I'm glad there are some punctual people! —Come right up! How are you, Frost?

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[*Hand shake. Then to* MRS. FROST.] And Mrs. Frost! Glad to see you on board.

[MRS. FROST *is a wiry, uncompromising, Boston-bred woman, very serious, and with an insistent, literal manner of speaking, entirely without humour.* FROST *is a little sandy-haired man, with a quiet droll manner, indolent speech, and a philosophic shrug at the times when he doesn't get a chance to speak.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Advancing upon* INGRAHAM.] Now, Mr. Ingraham, tell me the truth, not a polite fib—you had a Boston grandmother! Was I invited or was I not?

FROST

[*Taking* INGRAHAM'S *cordially outstretched hand.*] You may as well tell her, Inky.

MRS. FROST

[*To him.*] Don't interrupt, Charles! [*To* INGRAHAM.] You *must* tell me, Mr. Ingraham! [*As* INGRAHAM *tries to speak.*] Look me straight in the eye—No, Charlie tells his worst ones that way. . . .

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INGRAHAM

[*Quickly.*] But of course you were invited —didn't you get my telegram last night?

MRS. FROST

We did. But we just met Tom Updegraff on the dock and *he* said it was a *bachelor* cruise, and Charlie wanted *me* to turn right round and go home. And of course, if, for any reason, you've changed your mind—

FROST

Don't trifle with her affections, Inky, tell her!

INGRAHAM

I never change my mind, and the trip would have been a failure without you.

[FROST *collapses.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Sinking down triumphantly in chair.*] There! Charles! What do you think of yourself now?

FROST

I never think of myself at all, Emily. I think of *you.* It was the thought of you, alone, in a boat full of bachelors. . . .

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MRS. FROST

Bachelors? [*Snorts.*] How came you to be asked if it was a bachelor-party?

[INGRAHAM *goes up to rail and looks off.*]

FROST

I'm just as much of a bachelor as Tom Updegraff, if you come to that, and he said it was a "bachelor-cruise."

[MRS. FROST *looks sharply at* INGRAHAM.]

INGRAHAM

Tom thinks "a cruise on *The Bachelor*" means a bachelor-cruise, I suppose.

[FROST *removes hat, and sits down on bench.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Abruptly.*] Charles, you ought not to sit in this breeze! Go and show them where to put the luggage, won't you? [*To* INGRAHAM.] He gets over-heated so easily when he has a cold!

FROST

[*Who has risen obediently.*] But I haven't a cold!

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MRS. FROST

[*Placidly.*] And he takes cold so easily since he's had a weak chest.

INGRAHAM

[*Surprised.*] I didn't know he had a weak chest!

FROST

[*Who has started toward the companionway.*] It's a week-end chest—it always prevents my accepting any invitations of which Emily does not approve. Fishing-parties are death to it. She detects a hollow cough as soon as one is mentioned.

MRS. FROST

When you're done talking nonsense, Charles, you might see where I put the mustard.

FROST

[*In companionway with a gesture of despair.*] Emily—I hoped you had forgotten the mustard!

MRS. FROST

I never forget anything! I put it right next to the hot-water bottle. If there were no women in the world, what would become of you men?

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FROST

We should be scarce, Emily, but we might be happier. [*Exits.*]

MRS. FROST

[*As he exits down the companionway.*] There, Mr. Ingraham, I could see you didn't want to speak out before Charlie, but you can tell *me.* [*Comes closer to him.*] I know there's something behind all this.

INGRAHAM

[*Very frankly.*] You're right, Mrs. Frost, there is! I'll confide in you—since you've found me out! [*Smiles.*] You know, there's something about you that compels confidence. . . . ! [*They sit on skylight seat.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Flattered.*] So Charlie says.

INGRAHAM

This isn't a bachelor-cruise—as you see. It's a conspiracy.

MRS. FROST

[*Jumps.*] A what?

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INGRAHAM

A little brotherly conspiracy against my sister Racie, and Tom. You see . . . they've quarrelled. [*Face clouds.*]

MRS. FROST

I thought so! Racie told me that Tom had gone away on a fishing-trip and forgotten all about his wedding anniversary.

INGRAHAM

Yes, that was careless of Tom, but not criminal. Unfortunately Racie heard some stories about this trip that upset her. Yesterday afternoon I found Racie looking up the divorce laws of the State of New York and crying all over them, and, as far as I can judge, Tom's present address seems to be his Club.

MRS. FROST

Oh, that's dreadful! When a man's at his club you never know *where* he is!

INGRAHAM

So I planned this cruise to bring 'em together, and on the principle of not letting the left hand know what the right hand doeth, I invited Tom

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without saying anything to Racie, and Racie without saying anything to Tom. Tom got the idea that this is going to be a bachelor cruise, and Racie thinks that he is going out of town somewhere— [*Suddenly, noticing her face.*] But you don't like my little conspiracy?

MRS. FROST

[*Bluntly.*] I don't like deception, even about trifles, Mr. Ingraham.

INGRAHAM

[*After a pause, gently.*] My sister's happiness is not a trifle, Mrs. Frost.

MRS. FROST

No, no! But even if they *do* come—

INGRAHAM

They're not at the point of quarrelling before people. They'll accept the situation for a few days and propinquity will do the rest.

MRS. FROST

[*Puzzled.*] "Propinquity"?

INGRAHAM

Propinquity. The oldest and simplest remedy there is. I cut the recipe out of a paper the other

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day. [*Takes clipping from his vest-pocket.*] But you are an authority on home-made remedies— [*Hands it to her.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Fumbling at her eye-glasses on their hook.*] I can't read print without my glasses—

INGRAHAM

[*Taking the clipping and reading:*] "In Zurich, in the olden time, when a quarrelsome couple applied for a divorce, the magistrate never listened to them. Before deciding upon the case he locked them up for three days in the same room. Their food was passed in to them by an attendant who neither saw nor spoke to them. When they came out, at the end of three days—neither of them wanted to be divorced."

[*Folds up the clipping and returns it to his pocket.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Faintly.*] How—how extraordinary! But you can't lock Tom and Racie up—nor pass in their food!

INGRAHAM

[*Dryly.*] The food is not the point. A yacht presents less scope for people's avoiding each other

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than a modern New York house, with a Club attachment.

MRS. FROST

[*Gloomily.*] I hope you'll succeed! Of course, on a boat, they *can't* get away from each other. Some people ought to live on boats! [*Suddenly.*] And Charlie and me? Have you invited *us* because you thought—?

INGRAHAM

[*Appalled.*] Oh dear no! I've invited you as examples! [*Raises cap.*]

MRS. FROST

Humph! And your other guests?

INGRAHAM

Er—just the Packards.

MRS. FROST

[*Sitting up.*] Carrie and Jim Packard! Why, they're as good as divorced already. She plays bridge and he runs about town, and they never meet except by accident! You haven't asked them as examples, I hope?

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INGRAHAM

[*Discreetly.*] There are good examples and—the other kind—but one mustn't speak ill of one's guests—

FROST

[*Popping out at the top of the companionway with a mint-julep in his hand.*]—Or the dead—or the absent. Were you and Emily speaking ill of me? I was absent and a guest, and I'm nearly dead of this heat! [*Sips julep.*] Emily won't let me take my flannels off!

MRS. FROST

Drink that very slowly, Charles, or it will cool you off too suddenly. Did you find the mustard?

FROST

Emily, it is not there.

MRS. FROST

[*Goes to companionway.*] Nonsense, Charles, I put it there myself.

FROST

And I *un*-put it. [*As she disappears.*] Will mustard float?

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INGRAHAM

No, you idiot!

MRS. FROST

[*Reappearing.*] Put on your overcoat, Charles, till I've unpacked your sweater!

FROST

[*Takes up his coat obediently, throws it down the minute she exits.*] Why didn't you *make* this a bachelor-cruise? What have I ever done to you! Think of three whole days of this?

INGRAHAM

Nonsense! Emily's devoted to you. Suppose she were like Carrie Packard—

FROST

Carrie lets Jim do as he likes! Don't know where he is half the time. Think of being married to a wife like that!

INGRAHAM

You mightn't get on as well with her as with Emily.

FROST

Every man can get on with the woman he hasn't married.

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INGRAHAM

Well, if Emily can't get on with you, she's hard to satisfy.

FROST

Emily don't want to be satisfied. Women are perfectly miserable when they haven't got something to worry over, and Emily's the happiest woman I ever saw as long as she can worry over me!

INGRAHAM

But how about you?

FROST

Oh, I stand it as long as I can, and when the home-made remedies come too thick, I get off with the boys on a fishing trip. But Emily believes only the worst of fishing-trips.

INGRAHAM

What does Emily know about fishing-trips?

FROST

Nothing whatever. But that doesn't matter. What a woman doesn't know, she suspects.

INGRAHAM

You're a philosopher, Charlie!

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FROST

No, I'm not. All the ancient wheezes and thoughts on married life are started by old bachelors and maiden ladies. I haven't any theories about married life. But I know this! If you've got a wife everybody wants, it's hard to keep her; if you've got a wife nobody wants it's hard to lose her. [*Suspiciously, turning to* INGRAHAM.] I say, Inky, what makes you so interested in matrimony? You aren't going to be married, are you?

INGRAHAM

Not that I know of. [*After a moment.*] Frost, what per cent. of married people quarrel?

FROST

What per cent.?—all of 'em.

INGRAHAM

And how many of 'em make up?

FROST

Oh, nearly all! Lots of 'em quarrel for the fun of making up.

INGRAHAM

Humph! I'd sooner let go the rudder of a boat going at full speed, than quarrel with my hus-

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band, if I were a married woman. How does she know that her boat won't be shipwrecked or—taken over by some other woman?

FROST

Oh, I say, Inky!

INGRAHAM

Yes, some lawless little privateer who cruises about under her own flag, watching her chance to slip in—and capture drifting boats—I tell you, Frost, there's always a woman waiting for a critical moment like that. Don't the married women realize this? Don't they know that such a menace exists?

FROST

Lots of 'em don't know it—the young ones don't know much of anything.

INGRAHAM

Can't somebody tell 'em? I never could see why one generation didn't pass on the word to the next. Why can't fathers say to their sons, for instance: "This is where I struck a snag,"—or, "Look out for that shoal."

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FROST

[*Hastily.*] But that would be devilish embarrassing, Inky; imagine the son, just out of college saying: "Is that so, Pa? You and mother must have had a hell of a time, but Angela and I are different!" It's all very well for you to talk —you're only an onlooker at the marriage game!

INGRAHAM

Sometimes the onlookers see clearest. I never cared to take a hand, because I never found a partner to play it as it should be played. But—I've fallen into the habit of watching the game and taking an interest in the players. I applaud when they win, and I hate to see them lose, for the stakes are high, and sometimes they get up from the table ruined. . . . [*Rises.*]

[*Sounds of launch.*]

RACIE'S VOICE

[*Off Left.*] Why, of course it's safe, Carrie. Go on!

FROST

[*As* INGRAHAM *stops suddenly.*] Isn't that your sister?

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INGRAHAM

Yes, that's Racie! [*At gangway.*] Hello, little sister! Here you are at last! What's the trouble? [*Moving towards gangway.*]

[MRS. FROST *comes up from companionway with a red sweater which she gives* FROST.]

RACIE

Hello, Inky! [*She kisses him.*] Here we are. At least here I am, and Carrie Packard's sitting at the bottom of the gangway vowing she can't get up.

INGRAHAM

What's the trouble, Mrs. Packard?

RACIE

How do you do, Mr. Frost?

[*Shakes hands with him and* MRS. FROST *as* INGRAHAM *disappears over the side down the gangway.*]

FROST

[*Very cordially.*] Jolly to see you, Racie, but where's Tom?

[MRS. FROST *behind* RACIE *makes a warning movement towards him.*]

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INGRAHAM'S VOICE

How are you, Mrs. Packard, what's the trouble?

RACIE

[*Expression changes.*] Oh, Tom won't be here—he—he—couldn't manage it. [*A protesting cry from below.*] Poor Carrie Packard! Ladders make her so dizzy.

[*She turns back to the railing.*]

FROST

Ouch! Keep off my feet, Emily! I see that I have made a break.

[*He throws the sweater overboard.*]

[MRS. PACKARD, *assisted by* INGRAHAM *from below and* RACIE *from above, comes on deck. She is a big, handsome, voluble creature, smartly turned out, but masculine rather than dainty, in her attire.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Breathlessly.*] Oh, thank you, Mr. Ingraham. I know I'm a goose, but it gives me vertigo just to look at a ladder. . . . [*Seeing the* FROSTS, *comes down.*] How do, Emily. How do, Charlie. [*Shakes hands with them.*]

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There'll be one table for auction bridge anyway, and somebody to cut in. I hope your boat doesn't lean too much for card tables. What's her name?

INGRAHAM

Her name is *The Bachelor.* The launch is called *The Chaperon.*

MRS. PACKARD

I don't know a thing about a yacht, so I'll look over her before we begin to play—[*As he offers his arm.*] No, Charlie can take me, you stay here and receive your other guests—I'm dying to know who they are—?

INGRAHAM

Contrive to live ten minutes longer and I promise you a surprise.

MRS. FROST

[*To* MRS. PACKARD.] Carrie, isn't Mr. Packard coming, too?

[INGRAHAM *starts to speak but is drowned by* MRS. PACKARD.]

MRS. PACKARD

Oh! Packy's not back from his last fishing-trip —naturally! Packy is always just starting out

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on one fishing-trip, or not yet back from another. We know what that means, don't we, Racie?

RACIE

[*Hesitating, face clouds.*] I'm afraid we do!

MRS. FROST

[*Severely.*] These fishing-trips are nothing but an excuse for smoking, drinking and irregular hours. [*Glares at Frost.*] They break out like epidemics every Spring.

FROST

[*Mildly.*] The fish *will* lay eggs in the Spring, Emily.

INGRAHAM

[*Watching* RACIE'S *downcast face.*] I don't think the fish laying eggs have a thing to do with it. When warm weather comes along a man has just got to get out and go on some kind of a lark, just as a woman's got to go and spend more money than she ought on Easter hats. He calls it a fishing-trip and she calls it Spring shopping, but the impulse in both cases is the same.

RACIE

[*Brightening.*] Oh, if that's all—

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Laughing.*] Mr. Ingraham, you're too innocent to live! How you men do stand by each other! Luckily, we women know better than to believe all you tell us!

[*Goes off R. laughing, with* MR. *and* MRS. FROST.]

JENKS

[*Enters.*] Beg pardon, sir, but the skipper says— [*Sees* RACIE.] How do you do, Miss Racie?

RACIE

How do you do, Jenks! [*Crosses to* INGRAHAM.] Inky, I'm going down to see if you have given me the best stateroom.

INGRAHAM

Number One as usual, Racie.

RACIE

All right! [*Kisses him and exits down the companionway.*]

JENKS

The skipper says your orders were to sail at three-thirty, sir? [*The launch is heard off.*]

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INGRAHAM

Yes, but two of our party aren't here yet. Tell the skipper the moment Mr. Updegraff and Mr. Packard come aboard he may get under way.

JENKS

Here is the launch back, sir— [*Looks over rail.*] and it's Mr. Updegraff, with the cigarettes, sir.

RACIE

[*Enters from companionway.*] Inky, Inky, look at this! [*Holds out a card.*] "*Mr.* and Mrs. Updegraff." Is Tom on this party?

INGRAHAM

Suppose he is!

RACIE

It's a trap, Inky. Tom will think I've planned it. [*Tears up the card and attempts to pass him.*] Tell the others I've got a dreadful headache and have gone home.

INGRAHAM

But you promised to chaperone for me—

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RACIE

You've got plenty of chaperones . . . they're *all* chaperones. Let me go, Inky . . . [*Falls back a pace as* TOM *comes up from gangway.*]

TOM

Racie!

RACIE

Tom!

TOM

[*Pulling* INGRAHAM *down R.*] Is Racie going on this cruise?

INGRAHAM

Surely you don't object?

TOM

She's the one who will object. Did you see her face? Why, she'll think I have planned this—

INGRAHAM

She can't. She saw your face too, remember. . . . I say, you couldn't give an imitation of a man who's pleased, could you?

TOM

There is a little mistake here, Inky—I find I can't join you on this cruise after all.

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RACIE

Wait, Tom—if it is my being here that makes you uncomfortable, I had much rather go myself. [*Runs to gangway.*]

INGRAHAM

No, sir'ee! [*Runs after her.*]

TOM

You see how it is, I don't want to queer the trip or spoil Racie's fun.

RACIE

"My fun"!

TOM

[*Going to companionway.*] Fake up some explanation to the others.

INGRAHAM

[*Runs after him and holds him.*] Stop, Tom, I can't fake up any explanation of this that would satisfy a two-years' child.

TOM

That's up to you, you got me into this. [*Struggles to break away.*]

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RACIE

[*Same business.*] You had no right to deceive me as you did.

INGRAHAM

Good Lord—you are the worst honeymoon pair I ever tackled!

RACIE

"Honeymoon"!

TOM

What nonsense!

RACIE

Oh! Let me go—

TOM

I'll do the going, you stay here.

RACIE

Stay yourself!

INGRAHAM

[*Forcing them down stage.*] You won't either one of you go. If you leave ten minutes after arriving you'll make a scandal and humiliate me on my own boat. Here you are and here you'll stop and have a honeymoon whether you want to or not! [*Shakes them.*]

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MRS. FROST

[*Entering with* MR. FROST *R.*] Why, Tom Updegraff, Racie said you couldn't come!

FROST

At the last and final moment—Good lad! [*Shakes hands with* TOM.]

MRS. PACKARD

Good for you, Tom—that makes us six! Why can't we begin playing now. How about you, Racie?

RACIE

[*Sits L.*] Not just now, Carrie!

MRS. PACKARD

Well, you and I, Tom, against Charlie and Emily. [*Crosses to companionway.*] I'm so glad you and Racie don't insist on being partners. I think married people who do that are so tiresome. [*Goes down, followed by* FROST *and* TOM.]

INGRAHAM

[*Business with* RACIE *in chair.*] How did things get like this, Racie?

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RACIE

I know you think I'm a silly little goose, Inky, but our wedding day isn't just an ordinary date, it's—it's a symbol, it stands for the biggest thing that will ever happen to us—even the baby isn't as big, somehow—and when Tom left me to spend it alone, why I saw everything in a different light.

INGRAHAM

H'm—life is full of lights—and shades, Racie. But what did you do about it?

RACIE

I didn't do anything—

INGRAHAM

Superhuman good sense on your part.

RACIE

Tom did. He moved around to the Club.

INGRAHAM

Perhaps he saw things in a different light too. Come now, little sister, was it worth quarrelling about?

RACIE

I didn't quarrel—we just—talked it over—

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INGRAHAM

H'm—as you did just now? [*Crosses and sits by her.*] How is the boy?

RACIE

All right again—splendid!

INGRAHAM

Those lower teeth through?

RACIE

Quite. He never cries at night now.

INGRAHAM

Can you hear him upstairs when he does cry?

RACIE

No. [*Casually.*] But I've moved him and nurse down next to my room.

INGRAHAM

[*Same.*] Have you? And what becomes of Tom?

RACIE

Well, I've fitted up the rooms on the next floor for Tom.

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INGRAHAM

[*With a keen glance.*] So you've put Tom into bachelor quarters on the top floor? When did this happen?

RACIE

I—I changed the rooms while he was away on that fishing trip. [*Rises and crosses L.*]

INGRAHAM

Do you call that doing nothing? I withdraw what I said just now about superhuman good sense.

RACIE

[*Quickly.*] Nonsense, Inky! It's more convenient in every way. Tom has his own bathroom there and isn't disturbed by the baby . . .

INGRAHAM

"Who never cries at night now."

RACIE

[*Quickly.*] Tom said he liked the new arrangement—that he had been on the point of suggesting it.

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INGRAHAM

What else could he say when he found you had done it?

RACIE

[*Very sharp.*] Inky, I believe you're taking Tom's part!

INGRAHAM

It's not a question of parts. You and Tom are one, though you seem to have forgotten it. Married people do, I find. [*Walks up and down.*]

RACIE

[*Turns.*] Then you think I've made a mistake?

INGRAHAM

A big one. You've taken away the chance of things righting themselves naturally. You've broken Rule I.

RACIE

What are you talking about?

INGRAHAM

The Rules of the Marriage Game. Rule I: "Don't raise barriers." There are barriers enough already to prevent any two human beings entirely

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understanding each other, without your adding to them, in your case and Tom's, by the biggest kind of a barrier of your own raising.

RACIE

[*Considering the toe of her slipper.*] And Rule II?

INGRAHAM

[*Adopting her light, impersonal tone.*] Rule II? "Don't choose an all-absorbing pastime. Your husband will do likewise, and he will never choose the same one."

RACIE

[*Much interested.*] Like Carrie and Jim Packard. She plays auction morning, noon and night and he plays—

INGRAHAM

Hearts. I don't altogether approve of Packy —he's running with a rather loose set, but you can't much blame him. [*Pause—steals a glance at her.*] And you couldn't blame Tom, after banishing him to bachelor quarters on the top floor, if he gets up a consolation-cruise of his own.

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RACIE

[*Unhappily.*] I don't know what you mean.

INGRAHAM

[*In despair, tossing his cigarette over the rail.*] I don't suppose you do. Talk about the higher education of young women—it's not half high enough yet. You go to college and are taught all about the binomial theorem and how to solve quadratics but you're not taught anything about the human animal or how to solve him.

RACIE

Lots of girls take domestic science and learn to keep house.

INGRAHAM

Yes, but do they learn to keep the peace—tell me that! There's domestic art as well as domestic science and there ought to be a chair of it in every woman's college and no one should marry without a diploma. [*Enter* JENKS, *Right.*]

JENKS

Steam is up, sir, and there is a slight fog blowing up out there.

[RACIE *takes glasses from table and goes to stern of boat.*]

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INGRAHAM

[*Looking at watch.*] Tell the skipper he can get under way.

JENKS

Aye, aye, sir! [*Exits R.*]

INGRAHAM

No use waiting any longer for Jim Packard, I guess. [*Goes to companionway.*] Tom! Sorry to interrupt that bridge, but we're going to start. I say, Tom—[TOM *comes up first, followed by* FROST. *Takes* TOM *and* FROST *across R.* TOM *looks at* RACIE, *who goes below.*] What about Packy—did you catch him?

TOM

No—I just missed him. But you needn't count on his coming on this trip. As I left the University Club, I saw him spinning by with a mighty attractive motor-bonnet and veil in his car. With a pretty woman at his elbow—and knowing Packy I'll bet she was pretty—he'll forget he ever heard of your party.

[*He is interrupted by* JIM PACKARD, *a big, handsome, well-groomed fellow who runs hastily up the gangway and, seeing* INGRA-

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HAM, *plunges straight down to R. C., where* INGRAHAM *and* TOM *are standing. He is met by the* ASSISTANT STEWARD, *who disappears R. carrying two suit-cases strapped together.* PACKY *carries a rain-coat over his arm.*]

PACKY

Hello, Inky! Hello, Charlie and Tom! This is great!

INGRAHAM

[*Seizes* PACKY'S *hand with relief.*] Good old Packy! I tried to head you off, but it's all right since you haven't brought your friend.

[TOM *strolls over R. and exits with* FROST.]

PACKY

[*Quickly.*] But I have. [*Starts as* MRS. PACKARD *cries in the cabin* "It's a grand slam!"] My God!

INGRAHAM

What is it, man? Do you see a ghost?

PACKY

[*Clutching his arm.*] Th—th—that's not my wife?

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INGRAHAM

Certainly, it's Carrie!

PACKY

Oh, Great Jumping Jupiter! You don't mean my wife's here?

[*He reels against the skylight seat and shows signs of collapse.*]

INGRAHAM

I never saw such people. They hate the sight of each other. Damned if I ever plan a pleasant surprise again!

PACKY

[*Rising and going to him.*] This is an awful mess. You said it was to be a bachelor cruise. I took you at your word and brought—a friend.

INGRAHAM

All right, keep your hair on! We'll tuck your friend in somehow. He can bunk with me.

PACKY

[*Hisses in his ear.*] It isn't a *he*, you duffer!

INGRAHAM

[*Yells.*] What? You don't mean it's a woman?

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PACKY

You said it was a bachelor-cruise. . . .

INGRAHAM

Stop saying that, can't you? Suppose it was—what the devil made you think I'd stand for this sort of thing? The fellows you've been running with may do it, but you know it doesn't go on this boat.

PACKY

[*Stammering.*] I didn't stop to think, I was so keen on getting her to come. She's the dignified, stand-off kind—I never could make any headway with her—

INGRAHAM

The thing is to head her off now. Where is she?

PACKY

I sent the launch back for her. I told her the party was mine—I had to, to get her to come. If I'd known you were asking ladies I'd have cut my hand off—sooner than—

[*The launch is heard.*]

INGRAHAM

We must head her off! [*They start forward toward gangway.*] No, not there! Your wife

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will hear us. Come to the service gangway. I'll signal them to bring the launch there. [*As* INGRAHAM *and* PACKY *exit R.* MRS. OLIVER, *a beautiful, high-bred looking woman, appears at the head of the gangway, pauses for a moment, then, not seeing any one, comes down C. In a moment* RACIE *re-enters Left by the companion-way, and approaches her.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*With charming, well-bred hesitation to* RACIE.] This is *The Bachelor*, isn't it?

RACIE

[*Advancing with quick courtesy.*] Yes, and I can't think why my brother isn't here to welcome you. Do forgive him. I'm his sister—Mrs. Updegraff.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Hesitatingly taking* RACIE'S *outstretched hand.*] And I am Mrs. Oliver. [INGRAHAM *and* PACKY *re-enter behind the skylight, which shelters them from view.*] It must seem very odd, my arriving all alone like this, but Mr. . . .

[*Hesitating an instant.* PACKY *drops down and hides behind skylight.*]

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RACIE

Mr. Oliver couldn't come?—I see. I'm glad that didn't keep you away. My husband didn't come either—until the very last moment. [*As* INGRAHAM *crosses the deck to them.*] Inky, why weren't you here to introduce Mrs. Oliver to me? She had to do it herself.

[PACKY *makes signals to* INGRAHAM *and then shelters himself behind the mast.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Looking utterly nonplussed but mechanically courteous.*] I—I beg your pardon—

RACIE

And Mr. Oliver can't come—isn't it a pity?

INGRAHAM

"*Mr.* Oliver"?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Quickly.*] He insisted on my coming without him—but perhaps I shouldn't have done so?

[*Her eye wanders about in search of escape.*]

RACIE

[*Gaily forestalling* INGRAHAM, *who is about*

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to speak.] Why not? All of us came without our husbands, at least I did and Mrs. Packard. [*Takes* MRS. OLIVER'S *arm and leads her to* MRS. PACKARD, *leaving* INGRAHAM *transfixed in stony despair.*] Mrs. Packard—Mrs. Oliver.

[*There is a gasp from* PACKARD *hiding behind his mackintosh.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Briskly.*] Delighted to meet you. You play bridge?

MRS. OLIVER

Auction—yes.

MRS. PACKARD

Good! That makes us seven—two tables with dummy.

[*Turns to* INGRAHAM *while* RACIE *takes* MRS. OLIVER *to* MRS. FROST *and presents them to each other. They stand talking R.*]

INGRAHAM

[*To* MRS. PACKARD.] You won't need dummy! Your husband is on board.

[PACKY *tries to exit by gangway.*]

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Turns quickly.*] Why, Packy. I thought you were on a fishing-trip. How lucky you should turn up. That makes us eight.

PACKY

I—I don't feel a bit well, dear. I think I'll go on shore.

[INGRAHAM *seizes one of his arms*, MRS. PACKARD *the other.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Grimly.*] You can't desert us now.

MRS. PACKARD

Nonsense! [*Joyfully.*] Two tables complete. You and I, Mr. Ingraham, Racie and Charlie, Emily and Tom, Packy can have this other woman for a partner. Come and meet her. [*Drags the unwilling* PACKARD *across to* MRS. OLIVER.] Mrs. Oliver—my husband, Mr. Packard. He plays a good hand at bridge, *you* shall have *him* for a partner!

[*Tableau:* MRS. OLIVER, PACKARD *and* MRS. PACKARD *down front.* RACIE *and* MRS. FROST *Left*, TOM *and* FROST *enter on Right and* INGRAHAM *up stage to right*

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of MRS. OLIVER. *A shrill whistle cuts off* MRS. OLIVER'S *reply and announces the departure of the boat.*]

QUICK CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

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ACT II

TIME: *Five o'clock, on the same afternoon.*

SCENE: *The saloon of the yacht, daintily and charmingly decorated, with glistening white woodwork, seats upholstered in flowered chintz, floor covered with rugs. The three doors to the three guest staterooms are in a row across the back of the stage. No. 1, the Updegraffs' stateroom on the right; No. 2, the Frosts' stateroom, in the centre, and No. 3, the Packards' stateroom on the left. On the right up stage, is the door to the Owner's cabin, now occupied by Mrs. Oliver. Just below it is a narrow door into a passageway leading forward to the galley and below that is a sideboard, built into the wall, and with a tray of glasses on it, decanters, siphons and apparatus for preparing cocktails, etc. This sideboard is set in a recess in the wall, so that it projects but very slightly. In the space between the door of the Frosts' cabin and the door of the Packards'*

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cabin are some book shelves, and between the next doors a china-cupboard. On the left side, down in front, is a long cushioned seat, facing the audience, above it the last three or four steps of the companionway by which one descends into the saloon, with a brass hand rail visible; against the wall of the companionway is hanging a box of code signals. At R. C. is a cushioned circular seat, surrounding the mast which runs down through the cabin. Just below this is a bridge table, at which MRS. PACKARD *sits facing the audience,* TOM *directly opposite her,* PACKARD *on her right, and* MRS. OLIVER *on her left. Across from them down left is another bridge table, at which sits* RACIE *facing the audience,* MR. FROST *opposite her,* MRS. FROST *on her left, and* INGRAHAM *on her right. All are absorbed in their play as the curtain rises, and no one speaks for a moment, then the fog horn blows long and wailingly.*

PACKY

There she goes again! Cheerful!—to be stuck in a fog all afternoon.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Without lifting her eyes from the cards.*]

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You couldn't have a better afternoon—ss—ssh!
[*Fog horn again.*]

TOM

[*When it stops.*] What's the use of saying "ss-ssh-ssh" to *that?*

INGRAHAM

[*Rising and crossing to them, and glancing from the score to* MRS. OLIVER *who adds this last trick to the pile in front of her.*] Magnificent! That gives you and Mrs. Oliver two odd, game and rubber! Mrs. Packard and Tom are nowhere.

[MRS. OLIVER *opens her lips to speak but fog horn drowns her voice.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Turning cordially to* MRS. OLIVER.] Good bridge! I do respect anybody who can beat me at my own game, and I never found a woman who was my match at auction before! [*Shaking hands with her.*] We must see a lot of you in town! Packy, make a note of Mrs. Oliver's address.

[PACKARD, *flashing a frightened look at* MRS. OLIVER *and then at his wife,*

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fumbles in his vest pocket. INGRAHAM *hands him a score pencil and mutely warns him.*]

MRS. OLIVER

I—er—we are in an apartment hotel at 62 East 71st Street.

[PACKARD *writes this in his address book.*]

MRS. FROST

[*From the other table where they have finished playing.*] You put it down too, Charles! Mrs. Oliver has promised to send me a cook.

FROST

[*Scribbling the address on his shirt cuff.*] "Sixty-two East 71st Street." That's very near us.

MRS. OLIVER

Is it?

FROST

And nearer still to you, Tom.

TOM

[*As the fog horn gives a sharp final toot.*] Yes, we are in 69th Street—neighbors!— May we call?

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[INGRAHAM *and* PACKY *exchange horrified glances.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Rising.*] Thank you! You're very kind.

[*Is about to turn away but* RACIE *draws her down to the circular seat, still talking.*]

RACIE

My day at home is Thursday—

[INGRAHAM *and* PACKY *rise simultaneously,* PACKY *upsetting his chair.*]

INGRAHAM

Mix yourself a cocktail, Packy! [*To the others.*] I think the fog must be lifting.

[*Exits up companionway.*]

[PACKARD *goes to sideboard and begins to mix cocktails.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Rising and approaching* MRS. OLIVER *with extended cigarette-case.*] Have a cigarette?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Apologetically.*] No, thanks, I don't smoke. I'm horribly old-fashioned.

[PACKY *shakes the cocktail-mixer violently.*]

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MRS. FROST

[*Rising and joining Mrs. Oliver approvingly.*] I'm old-fashioned, too. I never can get used to seeing my friends smoke.

[*Sits left of her on circular seat.* RACIE *is on her right.*]

MRS. PACKARD

You'll have one, won't you, Racie?

[*Passes the case to her, and after* RACIE *has taken one, takes one herself, and stands leaning over* MRS. OLIVER.]

[INGRAHAM *re-enters down companion-way.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Briskly.*] On deck, all of you! [*Nobody stirs.*] This breeze is blowing the fog away.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Reluctantly glancing at the card table.*] It would be too windy for the cards on deck, I suppose.

INGRAHAM

Blow them to Jericho! [*Crossing to sideboard where he helps* PACKY.] We'll have another rubber to-night after dinner if you like.

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Resignedly.*] Oh, very well. It seems wicked to waste time with such a player as Mrs. Oliver aboard.

MRS. OLIVER

Thank you, Mrs. Packard. [*With great charm.*] It's sheer cowardice in me to stop now without giving you your revenge. I'm only putting off the day of reckoning as long as I can. No, thank you! No, really! [*To* PACKY, *who approaches her with a glass in each hand, and nervously offers her a cocktail. He does the same to* MRS. FROST *and* RACIE, *who shake their heads.*] My playing was all luck—I happened to hold the cards and have a good partner.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Positively.*] That's just what you didn't have! Packy played vilely! How could you, Packy? [*Accepts a cocktail from the wretched* PACKY *and says to him reproachfully.*] After I'd recommended you to Mrs. Oliver too, and fairly saddled you on her as a partner.

[PACKY, *not knowing which way to look, gulps the remaining cocktail and chokes.*]

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TOM

I'll do better by you than Mr. Packard has if you'll give me a chance after dinner? 'Tisn't fair that he should monopolize you. Going on deck?

[*As* MRS. OLIVER *rises, he offers her his arm, and they exeunt up the companionway, talking.*]

MRS. OLIVER

Oh, I should like to, if the breeze is coming up —it's the very time to go up.

FROST

I call that cool, calmly annexing the best player in the bunch.

MRS. PACKARD

Tom seems to have cheered up! He looked glum enough early this afternoon, when we came on board.

RACIE

[*Aside to* INGRAHAM; *buttonholing him, and getting him down Left.*] Inky, I have a plan. Mrs. Oliver feels so badly about having turned you out of your stateroom—

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INGRAHAM

She needn't. I shall be all right with the skipper.

RACIE

Of course; if Mr. Oliver had come, it couldn't have been helped; tho' I never knew you to invite more people than you had space for, before—but as he didn't come, let me take Mrs. Oliver in with me, and you and Tom share your stateroom. There's an idea!

INGRAHAM

[*Appalled.*] Not for worlds!

RACIE

But why not? [*Easily.*] Tom won't mind —ask him!

INGRAHAM

What you propose is impossible—

RACIE

[*Pouts.*] I don't see why it is impossible! I think Mrs. Oliver's charming. [*Kneels on centre seat plumping up the cushions.*] Why haven't any of us met her before?

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FROST

[*Strolling across, hands in pockets.*] Yes. Who is she, Inky?

INGRAHAM

Mrs. Oliver is the wife of—

[*Hesitates an instant.*]

RACIE

[*Pertly.*] Of Mr. Oliver! Yes, we know that! [PACKARD *sits down heavily.*]

INGRAHAM

An—an old acquaintance of mine. Haven't seen him for years.

[STEWARD *enters and clears the tables away.*]

MRS. FROST

Then how came you to invite them on this trip? You told me just intimate friends.

INGRAHAM

[*Flashing a look at* PACKY.] An intimate friend asked me to be nice to them.

FROST

Well, I should think it would be easy to be nice to her—what's the husband like?

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INGRAHAM

[*Crosses to R.*] Bill Oliver is a—a stock-broker.

RACIE

[*Interrupting.*] Why, she said his name was Jim!

INGRAHAM

Yes, yes, "Jim," of course. He's—just a stock-broker.

MRS. PACKARD

That's odd. She told me he was interested in horses. Said he breeds race horses and sells 'em abroad.

INGRAHAM

[PACKY *kicks* INGRAHAM.] That's it. A stock-raiser, not a stockbroker. Knew it was something about "stock"! Nice fellow, Oliver. Racie, don't you want something over your shoulders?

RACIE

No, I'm not cold.

MRS. PACKARD

Well, I am, I must get a sweater. Excuse me!

[*Exits to stateroom.*]

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FROST

Stockbroker, eh? Well, he's got a mighty nice wife. I don't know when I've been so drawn to anybody! [*Exits up steps.*]

[INGRAHAM *and* PACKARD *exchange haunted glances.*]

MRS. FROST

I think she must come from Boston. She has such a refined face! [*Exits into stateroom.*]

RACIE

Inky, where did you meet her?

INGRAHAM

[*Desperately.*] I met her on a boat.

RACIE

Mr. Oliver has a yacht too, I suppose.

INGRAHAM

Ye—yes, he has.

RACIE

[*Going to steps.*] Hope she'll ask us on it sometime. [PACKY *rises suddenly.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Hisses in his ear.*] Stay here!

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RACIE

Do you know, I feel as if I'd known her for ages! [RACIE *goes up.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Savagely to* PACKY.] This is a nice mess!

PACKY

[*Same.*] You bet it is. What possessed you to spin all those yarns about Mr. Oliver?

INGRAHAM

[*Whirling round.*] And you sit there and criticise me, while I'm dancing on a giddy tight-rope of lies to save your neck. Your ingratitude is sickening, Packy. [*Walks away.*]

PACKY

I'm too scared to be grateful. Get me out of this hole, and I'll black your boots for the rest of my life.

INGRAHAM

[*Coming back.*] Get yourself out. Go to Mrs. Oliver like a man and ask her to invent some excuse for leaving the boat.

PACKY

[*Imploringly.*] No, no, Inky, you speak to her. You're the captain; order her to leave!

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INGRAHAM

Don't be an ass! I can't be rude to a woman, I don't care who she is, on my own quarter deck. Besides, I don't know her.

PACKY

And I barely know her! That's the truth! [*As* INGRAHAM *looks skeptical.*] She's kept me at arm's length ever since I met her, and hang it all, I had to do something, so I framed up this yacht story; she'd no idea there'd be any one but just us two, I swear to you.

INGRAHAM

[*Thoughtfully.*] Humph! She doesn't seem exactly your kind, Packy. She's miles too good for this sort of thing.

PACKY

I can't imagine how she got into it. She is too good for it! Lord! What a wife she'd have made!

INGRAHAM

What makes you think that?

PACKY

[*Simply.*] Any woman who'd put in all her time making life attractive to me, looks awfully

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good to me! Carrie thinks of nothing but auction—but this woman can play a stunning game of bridge and do all the other things too.

INGRAHAM

She's a clever creature! Has captivated everybody! Frost is thawing in rivers!

PACKARD

I never saw old Charlie act that way before. He's as happy as a cat with butter, and he has no idea why!

INGRAHAM

[*Crossing to Left.*] It's Tom I'm worrying about.

PACKARD

[*Sharply.*] Tom! The woman's not a cradle-snatcher!

INGRAHAM

[*Slowly.*] Tom's in an inflammable state just now, and I can't have this little privateer slipping in alongside.

PACKARD

Odd, devilish odd, how she makes you feel you'd rather tie up to her than any craft afloat.

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INGRAHAM

Rather hard on Carrie!

PACKARD

No, really! I feel very kindly towards Carrie. [*Speaks low in* INGRAHAM'S *ear.*] You know those pearls she's wearing? That's a joke on her —they're genuine!

INGRAHAM

[*Sitting C.*] "Genuine"! Naturally. Why should *your* wife wear imitation?

PACKARD

That's the joke—she thinks they're imitation!

INGRAHAM

I'm hanged if I follow you!

PACKY

You see, Carrie's been awfully unlucky at bridge lately—lost several thousand—came to me about a month ago and said she was going to sell her pearls. I said: "Oh, shucks, don't do that," and offered to put up a bond or two. But no, she's awfully straight from the shoulder, Carrie is. Said they were *her* debts, and she'd pay 'em—sell

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the pearls and get a good imitation string—who'd know the difference? Hoped I wouldn't mind. . . .

INGRAHAM

You'd given 'em to her?

[*During the next speech* MRS. OLIVER *comes down stairs unnoticed.*]

PACKY

Wedding present! Neither of us is much on sentiment—but I couldn't stand *that.* So I said I'd drive a better bargain than she would; she handed 'em over, and a week later I brought her three thousand and a string of "fake" pearls—same old necklace of course! She admired the imitation—said you couldn't tell 'em from the real!

[*Laughs.*]

INGRAHAM

But aren't you going to tell her?

PACKY

Oh, sometime! 'Twon't do her any harm, for a while, to think she's wearin' "fake" pearls—

[INGRAHAM, *who has caught sight of* MRS. OLIVER, *beats a hasty retreat door R.*]

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PACKY

Oh, I say, Inky? Where are you going?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Coming down.*] Oh, Mr. Packard! I'm in such difficulty!

PACKY

[*Contritely.*] I know, it's a beastly shame, and it's all my fault, every bit of it.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Interrupting him in a low voice.*] It's my suit-case—it was with your bags in the motor—

PACKY

By Jove! I never once thought—

MRS. OLIVER

And I'm afraid it's with your bags now, in your stateroom.

PACKY

Good Lord!

MRS. OLIVER

If you wouldn't mind looking—

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PACKY

[*Quickly.*] Why no! Of course not! [*Starts towards his stateroom, comes back and whispers.*] Was your name on it?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Same.*] No, just XXX.

PACKY

I'll get it. [*Goes to his stateroom door, tries to enter, jumps back and says in hoarse whisper.*] I forgot my wife was there! [*In a high piping voice.*] Nobody! Nothing at all!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Coming out.*] Oh, it's you, Packy. What did you want?

PACKY

A handkerchief. [*Aside to* MRS. OLIVER.] I'll get the bag when she goes on deck.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Turns back and hands him one from inside the stateroom.*] There you are! Jenks unpacked your luggage. He knew perfectly well well you'd never do it yourself. [*At steps.*] Coming on deck?

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PACKY

Not now. Got a headache.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Laughs.*] Too much fishing-trip? Well, if you've got a headache, the deck's the place for you. Won't you come, Mrs. Oliver? [*Takes him by arm, he resists.*] You want fresh air!

[*She drags him up.*]

PACKY

I'd much prefer staying here—

[*Motions to* MRS. OLIVER *to get the bag herself, when they are gone.*]

[*As* MRS. OLIVER *goes quickly to the* PACKARDS' *stateroom,* FROST *enters R.*]

FROST

Oh! There you are! [MRS. OLIVER *turns to bookcase, taking down a book at random from the shelf—coming down, book in hand.*] Everybody's asking for you.

MRS. OLIVER

[*On steps.*] Oh! Are they?

FROST

Let 'em ask. [*As she starts up steps.*] Stay here and talk to me! [*Taking her book as they*

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sit C.] Don't read! I've had my nose in a book most of my life, and I've just begun to realize that the proper study of mankind is—woman!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Smiling.*] I should think your education had been a liberal one?

FROST

[*Much flattered.*] I've had a good solid foundation, but do you know I often wish now I'd taken more extras.

MRS. OLIVER

The more frivolous branches? It's never too late to mend.

FROST

You think I'm not too old to learn?

MRS. OLIVER

I shouldn't call thirty-nine *old.*

FROST

[*Pleased.*] Should you really take me for thirty-nine?

MRS. OLIVER

There or thereabouts. You're younger than your wife, aren't you?

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FROST

[*Nervously, glancing over shoulder.*] As a matter of fact, I am, but she doesn't like it mentioned.

MRS. OLIVER

And you've a much younger temperament. You have a sense of humor; she has a sense of duty.

FROST

[*Sighs.*] Emily is most conscientious. She takes such care of my health—

MRS. OLIVER

Your health? Why, you look so strong.

FROST

[*Artlessly.*] As a matter of fact, I'm as hard as nails, but she thinks I have a weak chest.

[*During this conversation,* FROST *has drawn himself up from his usual lounging attitude, till he looks twice the man he did.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Surveying him.*] A weak chest—what! with those shoulders!

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FROST

[*Simply.*] I made the crew at Harvard.

MRS. OLIVER

At Harvard?

FROST

[*Eagerly.*] Yes, those were days! Ever happen to see any of the Cambridge boat-races?

MRS. OLIVER

Indeed I did—[*Catches herself.*] A long time ago. Are you still fond of rowing?

FROST

Yes, but Emily thinks the strain is bad for the heart!

MRS. OLIVER

Don't tell me you have a weak heart!

FROST

[*Looks at her.*] It's under a considerable strain right now! [MRS. OLIVER *laughs and rises. He follows her, doesn't see* MRS. FROST *open her stateroom door, and then draw back, and listen.*] Oh, don't go! I never met a woman like you before—you know, you're *dif-*

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ferent, somehow. [*At steps.*] Yes! Let's find a quiet place on deck—

TOM AND PACKY

[*Running down.*] I say, Frost, this is monopoly! Mrs. Oliver might like a little air!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Quickly.*] Mr. Frost was just asking me to come on deck. Weren't you, Mr. Frost?

[*She runs up the steps with* FROST, *surrounded and followed by the two men a moment later.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Who has come out of her stateroom—repeats, staring after them.*]—"Never met a woman like you before—find a quiet place on deck"—

[*About to follow them.*]

MRS. PACKARD AND RACIE

[*Entering from R.*] Where's Mrs. Oliver? Where are the men?

MRS. FROST

Find Mrs. Oliver, and you'll find the men!

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MRS. PACKARD

Yes, I'm beginning to think it's that way myself.

RACIE

[*Warmly.*] Well, you can't blame them for it. She is perfectly charming.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Sits centre,* MRS. FROST *on bench L.*] Queer! I never knew Packy to be attracted by a woman of that type before!

MRS. FROST AND RACIE

[*Together.*] What type?

MRS. PACKARD

Oh—just a nice woman, a married woman—like us!

MRS. FROST

[*Who is thinking hard.*] That's it—she's like us—only different! Do you know, I don't feel so sure she's from Boston!

RACIE

[*Honestly.*] She's nicer than we are! I do like her! And I wonder how she does it?

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MRS. FROST AND MRS. PACKARD

Does what?

RACIE

Oh—you know! Makes you want to fall at her feet—without lifting a finger! I never met a woman with so much charm!

MRS. FROST

[*Snorts.*] Charm! Unless a woman wants something she has no business to get, she has no *need* of charm!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Has obviously come back for suit-case. Looking at them from steps.*] Oh, here you are! I thought I'd find you on deck. Aren't you coming up?

RACIE

As soon as we've finished talking about you.

MRS. PACKARD

[*As* MRS. OLIVER *draws back.*] Oh, don't be frightened! We were saying the most complimentary things! Excepting Emily here, who swears you come from Boston.

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Coming down and sitting by* MRS. PACKARD.] Mrs. Frost couldn't pay me a higher compliment —I wish I deserved it.

MRS. FROST

Where *do* you—er—

MRS. OLIVER

Paris is where I've lived most.

MRS. PACKARD

Ah?

MRS. FROST

Oh-h-h!

RACIE

Cheer up, Emily! Quite nice people *do* come from Paris! [*To* MRS. OLIVER.] Think of living among those heavenly shops!

MRS. OLIVER

It isn't the shops I love, tho' they are fascinating. It's Paris itself. Paris in April, when the chestnuts are in bloom, and the lilacs are out in the Bois! I can shut my eyes and smell them now, and see the golden dust above the Arc de Triomphe as one drives toward it at sunset. And

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the bridges at night with their long lines of lights, and their velvety black shadows, with a big yellow moon coming up behind the Beaux-Arts. Oh, Paris— [*Checks herself.*]

MRS. FROST

New York must seem quite dull in comparison! I wonder you could bear to change?

MRS. OLIVER

On the contrary, I greatly prefer American life.

MRS. PACKARD

What strikes you as the chief difference between the two?

MRS. OLIVER

On the Continent, it's the man for whose benefit society is organized. In America, everything revolves about the woman. The attitude of the average Frenchman towards women is—intolerable! Now the American man treats women as his equals.

MRS. FROST

As his superiors, you mean!

MRS. OLIVER

Yes! Any woman who couldn't get along with American men—

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MRS. FROST

Even American men will bear watching! But one hears such dreadful stories of the conduct of European husbands! I don't see how a French wife can ever feel—certain!

MRS. OLIVER

She couldn't, if she conducted herself on the American plan.

THE THREE WOMEN

[*Together.*] "The American plan"? What do you mean?

MRS. OLIVER

Well, to be quite candid, American wives strike me—after a long residence abroad—as being rather careless!

MRS. FROST

[*Indignantly.*] Careless! When I've never let Charlie get wet feet, not *once* since we were married!

MRS. PACKARD

Don't be a goose, Emily! Feet aren't the point. Mrs. Oliver means that the American wife doesn't stay on her job—

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RACIE

[*Earnestly.*] What is a wife's job?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Lightly.*] Isn't it to convince her husband that she is the only woman in the world worth his attention?

MRS. FROST

But a wife can't stoop to a vulgar struggle of that kind! She should stand on her dignity!

MRS. OLIVER

Some do. [*Smiles.*] But it's a lonely elevation!

MRS. PACKARD

A wife had better abandon her dignity than to have her husband abandon her, you mean? Of course it's only in France that such things happen! And how does this wonderful French wife manage to convince the man that she's the only one worth his attention?

MRS. OLIVER

[*A little restive under the sarcasm of this.*] Mainly by being worth it, in every detail, and by doing it afresh every day.

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Rather contemptuously.*] Oh, you mean the conquests of the toilet-table! We all know the French excel in cosmetics and lingerie!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Stung.*] Well, really, Mrs. Packard, it's not quite so simple as *that.* In addition to being an expert in personal charm, the French woman cultivates her mind until she is one of the cleverest talkers and most sympathetic listeners the world can show. This requires time.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Carelessly.*] Heavens, yes! How does she ever find time—

MRS. FROST

[*Slyly.*] For bridge?

MRS. PACKARD

[*Quite seriously.*] Yes! That reminds me—I've a problem in my suit-case—wait till I show you the hand—

[*Disappears into her stateroom. Mrs. Oliver nervous.*]

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RACIE

There goes Carrie! [*With pretended lightness.*] Your model Frenchwoman never does anything so stupid as—quarrel with her husband, does she?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Looking earnestly at* RACIE.] She never does anything so—dangerous! If she is really trying to protect her happiness against any influences which menace it, a quarrel robs her of her strongest weapon.

RACIE

[*In a low voice.*] Her strongest weapon?

MRS. OLIVER

Her tenderness.

[RACIE *remains quite still for a moment, turning her wedding-ring on her finger.*]

[*Suddenly upon their silence,* MRS. PACKARD *re-enters hastily from her stateroom, her face flushed, and carrying an open suit-case.* MRS. OLIVER *quails on seeing her, then recovers her courage, and faces the situation without flinching.*]

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MRS. PACKARD

Oh! Oh! Oh! Emily! Racie! Girls! [*In a choked voice.*] Look at that! What would your model French wife say to that, I wonder? [*Dumps the suit-case on the circular seat in the midst of them.*]—Or that—or that? [*Holds up a lace negligée cap in one hand, and a filmy dressing-gown in the other.*]

RACIE

[*Seizing the dressing-gown.*] How heavenly, Carrie! Is it yours?

[MRS. FROST *holds up a hare's foot and slippers.*]

MRS. PACKARD

It certainly is *not!* Does it look like *my* property?— Or Packy's?

MRS. FROST

[*With night-gown case.*] Oh-h! Is there no name on the case?

MRS. PACKARD

[*Looking at end of case.*] No! Just "XXX"—3 X's—like a barrel of flour—

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[*Crosses and sits Center with stocking in hand.*] —and strapped to one of Packy's. [*Stops short.* MRS. FROST *gives a cry of horror.*] Yes! Packy came here directly from his fishing-trip—didn't even go home, but drove to the Club, found Inky's wire there, and came on here bag and baggage. [*Wipes eyes with silk stocking.*] And I would like to know what *baggage* is responsible for *this!*

[*She runs her bare forearm up the stocking and holds it out, displaying a succession of diamond-shaped medallions of black lace, which are distinctly visible, as she flourishes them before* RACIE, MRS. OLIVER *and* MRS. FROST, *who recoil as from a viper.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*With an effort.*] It's a beautiful design!

MRS. PACKARD

Oh, she's a designing wretch whoever she is! Is that the outfit of a lady? I may have my nose over the bridge table most of the time, but I've got eyes and ears too, and those stockings speak louder than words. [*Flourishes them again.*]

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FROST'S VOICE

[*From companionway, above.*] What are you all about down there?

MRS. FROST

[*In a panic.*] Quick! Carrie! It's Charlie! [*Clutches the case.*] I wouldn't have Charlie see *those* things for anything in the world!

MRS. PACKARD

Then head your Charlie off!

[MRS. OLIVER *exits into her stateroom.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Going up.*] Don't come down, Charlie, I'm coming up.

RACIE

You don't really think—

MRS. PACKARD

[*Calmly.*] Think, my dear, I know. Long experience has taught me that this—[*Indicating contents of suit-case.*]—is the bait for fishing-trips. I never expected Jim Packard to be a saint—if I had I'd have been disappointed, but heretofore—[*Sits down heavily.*]—he's always

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been considerate enough to keep his escapades out of my sight.

RACIE

[*Appalled.*] And that's your idea of consideration—keeping things from you?

MRS. PACKARD

My dear child, don't be so horrified. Your husband does just the same.

RACIE

Tom? Never!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Tolerantly.*] Of course not. He's the one exception in the world . . . and every woman thinks so!

RACIE

Oh, but I know that Tom. . . .

[*Stops suddenly.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Kindly, seeing* RACIE's *distress.*] Well, well —you've only been married a couple of years. Perhaps you've succeeded in keeping Tom tied to your apron strings.

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RACIE

[*Indignantly.*] Indeed, I haven't.

MRS. PACKARD

Oh, you don't like that either? Well, if you don't want him tied, and you don't want him free, what do you want?

RACIE

For him to stay, not because he's tied, but because he wants to.

[*Exits into her stateroom and slams door.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Who has followed her to door.*] What's the use of your getting into a rage with me? [*Turns as* FROST *enters and looks inquisitively at suitcase.*] Excuse *me!*

[*Goes down to table, crams things into suitcase and puts it under the circular seat.*]

FROST

[*Sees a stocking that* MRS. PACKARD *has dropped, and picks it up.*] What's this?

MRS. PACKARD

What's what? [MRS. PACKARD *crosses, snatches stocking from him and crams it in her*

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pocket.]—Thank you! [*Goes up steps.*]

[FROST *left alone with the suit-case pulls it out, opens it, and gleefully examines contents piece by piece until* MRS. FROST *enters.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Calls.*] Charlie!—Charles, what have you there?

FROST

Oh nothing. Nothing whatever!

[*Hides negligée under front of coat.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Turning him around.*] Do you call that nothing? [*Pulls it out.*]

FROST

Oh, that little trifle? It's nothing! There's nothing in it.

MRS. FROST

Perhaps you had rather there *were* something in it. [*Shuts case and shoves it under seat.*] Charles, are *you* responsible for the contents of that suit-case?

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FROST

Don't be silly, Emily—how should I know anything about the contents of that suit-case? I do not! But I am willing to learn!

MRS. FROST

Charles!

FROST

Yes, why don't *you* get a few things like this instead of that old blue flannel wrapper and your hair in curl papers—you know a fellow gets awfully tired of that sort of thing.

MRS. FROST

You, Charles, a sober middle-aged man?

FROST

I'm not so old that I haven't got a leaning towards pretty things of that kind.

MRS. FROST

Oh, if *that's* all—

FROST

It's not all—but it's something—it'll help!

MRS. FROST

Charles Frost, you must be out of your head! Me wear things like that! Why, I never did,

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nor my mother, nor my grandmother before me!

FROST

Perhaps it would have been better if they had! You know, Emily, every man likes to look at a red apple occasionally!

[TOM *runs down companionway.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Indignantly, crossing R.*] So did Adam! Apples! I'll get you a mustard plaster.

[*Exits R.*]

TOM

[*Pausing on steps.*] I say, Frost, what's the trouble?

FROST

[*Going R.*] "Trouble"! How do you mean "trouble"?

TOM

[*Coming down.*] Mrs. Frost seemed upset.

FROST

I hadn't noticed anything—nothing unusual! [*Turning on* TOM.] My wife's all right! She suits me! I like her like that. That's the way I like her!

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[*Exits R. as* RACIE *comes out of her state-room and meets* TOM *at C.*]

TOM

I beg your pardon! [*Turns to go.*]

RACIE

[*As he turns away.*] Wait, Tom! I hope you don't think *I* planned this!

TOM

[*Facing her squarely.*] See here, Racie! I'm not going to force myself on you. You've showed me pretty plainly how you feel—

RACIE

You showed me that you wanted your liberty —and I gave it to you.

TOM

Liberty! Rubbish! Because a man wants to go on a fishing trip with a few friends!

RACIE

Carrie Packard says—

TOM

I don't care what anybody says, Racie—there was nothing for you to get upset over—

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RACIE

[*Quickly.*] It was the time you selected for your trip—

TOM

I didn't select the time—the boys did that.

RACIE

[*Sits C.*] But you never remembered that the fifteenth was our anniversary. . . .

TOM

[*Sits by her.*] That went clean out of my head. I was so all-fired busy before I left, it didn't occur to me, but, by jingo! when it did, didn't I cut out the rest of the cruise, take a train at Portsmouth and get back late that evening with a little present in my pocket for you, and a little supper all planned—

RACIE

[*Surprised.*] But, Tom, you never told me that!

TOM

I never had the chance! When I got back that night—after a whole day's travel to make it, you know what I found—a locked door—an invisible

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wife, and all my things moved upstairs. Not that I mind that—I *like* the new arrangement! But it was the way you did it—no man'll stand being treated like a bad boy!

RACIE

[*Leaning her head on her hand.*] I never thought married life could be so difficult! It looks so easy.

TOM

Other people seem to get along all right.

RACIE

[*Protestingly.*] Yes, but where do they get to? Either they "shake down" and become fond of each other in a horrid, nagging, middle-aged fashion, like the Frosts, or they grow farther and farther apart, like Carrie and Jim Packard—each going their own way, and only meeting by chance. Carrie told me this was the first week-end she and Jim had spent together this year, and this was an accident. Isn't there any middle path?

TOM

Of course there is. But we've got to give in to each other occasionally.

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RACIE

[*Making an involuntary movement towards him.*] It's that "occasionally" that makes all the trouble. Each one always thinks it's the other's turn to give in!

TOM

[*Putting his hand under her chin, and tipping her face up.*] Then we ought to have a schedule.

RACIE

Yes! You give in to me on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and I'll give in to you Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

TOM

[*Putting his arm around her.*] And Sundays?

RACIE

Sundays, we'll have a good fight and catch even.

TOM

[*Kissing her.*] I say, Racie, why aren't you always as jolly as this?

[INGRAHAM *enters on kiss and slips out again.*]

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RACIE

[*Coaxingly.*] Tom, what was the present?

TOM

[*Surprised.*] Oh, the anniversary present?

RACIE

Yes, yes, you haven't . . .

TOM

[*Pretending embarrassment to tease her.*] Why, I selected a pair of garter buckles, beauties they were, too, but of course after what happened, I didn't think you'd care for them, so I—I —

RACIE

[*Interrupting him with a little cry.*] Oh! Tom! I know! . . . You've given them to someone else! [*Covers her face with her hands.*]

TOM

Why, Racie!

[*As she bursts into tears, still covering her face, he draws out of his pocket a jeweller's case, opens it so that the audience may see a pair of diamond buckles inside, and is about to give it to* RACIE.]

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RACIE

[*In a sob, without lifting her head.*] Carrie Packard was right!

TOM

[*Draws back the case and says sternly.*] What has Mrs. Packard to do with it? How is she right?

RACIE

[*Still hiding her face.*] She told me I was a fool to trust you to go off on fishing-trips. . . .

TOM

[*Closing the case and returning it to his pocket.*] Oh, she did, did she? That was kind of Mrs. Packard! And you believed everything she told you? You thought because Jim goes in for certain things, that I . . .

RACIE

[*Interrupting.*] Sometimes on trips like these —there—are—women aboard!

TOM

[*Hotly.*] Well, there might be any amount for all I care! That sort of woman doesn't appeal to me in the least.

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RACIE

[*Stung.*] Oh, it's only because such a woman doesn't appeal to you then? If she did . . .

TOM

Racie, have you taken leave of your senses?

RACIE

No, I've just come to them.

[*As they stand confronting each other,* MRS. OLIVER *enters Right, sees* TOM *and* RACIE, *pauses the fraction of a second, and goes straight on.*]

MRS. OLIVER

The sun's coming out beautifully. Aren't you going on deck, Mrs. Updegraff?

RACIE

[*Recovering herself, and retreating into her stateroom.*] Yes! As soon as I get my hat!

[*Closes door.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*To cover* TOM'S *confusion.*] Mr. Ingraham says we'll soon be starting now.

TOM

[*Irritably.*] I hope so! This sticking in an eternal fog gets on my nerves! [*His voice*

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softens before her gaze and he adds, more gently.]
Won't you have a cocktail?

MRS. OLIVER

No, thanks. I never take them. Mix yourself one, and give me a glass of vichy, please.

[*As* TOM *goes down to the sideboard, she enters her stateroom for a moment, but does not close the door.*]

[*Four bells are struck above.*]

[*Speaking from her stateroom.*] Surely it's later than four o'clock?

TOM

[*Busy at the sideboard.*] That's four bells, six o'clock, ship time, you know.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Coming out of her stateroom wearing the hat in which she first appeared, but with a motor-veil wound round it, and a long coat over her arm.*]
I didn't know.

TOM

[*Puzzled.*] Why, I thought you understood all about boats!

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Puzzled.*] Why, what ever made you think that? [*Comes down to him.*]

TOM

Some one was saying that Mr. Oliver— [*Breaks off as she comes close to him, looking at her intently.*] I say, surely, we've met before!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Startled, but speaking lightly.*] Why, no. I should have remembered.

TOM

So should I! [*Looks at her earnestly.*] But I've seen you somewhere. [*Handing her the glass of vichy and raising his own glass.*] Here's to you! [*As she takes hers, her hand trembles so that she spills a little.*] Why, how your hand shakes! You're tired—sit down here a moment. [*Takes glass and makes her sit on centre seat.*] You'd better have the whiskey? [*Tries to give her his glass.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Rallying herself and taking the vichy which she drinks quickly.*] Nonsense! You're the one

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who was just complaining of "nerves"! You were looking when I came down just now, as tho' you found life—well—difficult!

TOM

[*Looking into his glass.*] I was—when you came down!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Briskly.*] Perhaps I'd better go up again?

TOM

No! No! [*Suddenly confidential.*] Tell me—you've been married—you are married—what is it makes the thing so darned—difficult?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Equally frank and direct.*] Well, there are a number of things, unfortunately. But there are on the other hand one or two things that can make marriage easy and pleasant.

TOM

[*Trying to conceal his eagerness.*] Men—mention one or two—won't you?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Lightly, but with meaning.*] Well, one—one is a surface. I think one should cultivate a

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surface in married life—a finish, a gloss—not an enamel, that's too hard, and a varnish is artificial —but a soft polish like that one sees on the best furniture,—and one should be exceedingly careful not to let anything scratch or mar that surface. In marriage a surface is what the entente cordiale is in the diplomatic service. A wife should maintain a constant entente cordiale with her husband —and be as careful not to break it as if she were maintaining a European peace.

TOM

You know, I think that's corking. Why, there's everything in having a surface!

MRS. OLIVER

On the other hand, the qualities that go to make marriage a success, are all under the surface, like icebergs, four-fifths of which are out of sight—aren't they?

TOM

I don't know! I think *you're* out of sight! You hit the nail on the head every time. A fellow could—[*Pulls himself up sharply.*] How is it you understand so much more than women usually do?

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Rising rather abruptly and putting her veil round her hat.*] I don't know. Because I keep my eyes open, I suppose. Aren't we going on deck?

TOM

[*Joyfully, as she looks at him over her shoulder.*]—I know where I saw you before! It was you in Packy's motor-car this afternoon, passing the University Club. Of course! [*Moment's pause.*] I didn't know you knew old Packy!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Speaking with difficulty.*] Didn't you see him introduced to me on deck this afternoon?

TOM

Why, yes, I remember now. And yet I could have sworn to the veil and hat. I admired the glimpse I had of you so much, that I remember saying, "There goes old Packy with another pretty woman."

[*Suddenly catching a glimpse of her face, as she turns away.*]

Don't go! What have I said? [*Seizing her hand, which she tries to withdraw.*] I beg your

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pardon. What if you were in Packy's motor, you don't think I meant—anything—wrong?

[*As she struggles to withdraw her hand,* RACIE *opens her door and comes out.* MRS. OLIVER *pulls her hand away and runs upstairs.* TOM *runs up hastily after her, still saying:*]

Please! Mrs. Oliver!

[*Neither sees* RACIE.]

[INGRAHAM *enters R., stops as he sees* RACIE, *whose back is to him, as she stands staring after them.*]

INGRAHAM

Everything all right now, Racie?

RACIE

[*Turning a tragic face.*] No. Everything's wrong. You were right about the consolation-parties, Inky. I've just found Tom holding Mrs. Oliver's hand.

INGRAHAM

[*Jumping.*] Holding Mrs. Oliver's hand?

RACIE

Yes! . . . and both of them were frightfully upset.

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MRS. OLIVER'S VOICE

[*Above.*] I'll be back in a moment.

INGRAHAM

Sssh! Here she comes! [*As* MRS. OLIVER *appears at the head of the companionway.*] Go on deck by the other staircase. Leave us together.

RACIE

But, Inky—

INGRAHAM

Do as I say—

[RACIE *exits as* MRS. OLIVER *descends.*]

INGRAHAM

[*Stepping forward and intercepting* MRS. OLIVER, *who looks nervously about, anxious to find her suit-case.*] Pardon me, Mrs. Oliver, but could you spare me one moment?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Quietly.*] Certainly, Mr. Ingraham, as many as you like, but I can save you several.

INGRAHAM

How can you do that?

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MRS. OLIVER

[*With dignity.*] Because I think I know what you want to say to me.

INGRAHAM

[*With determined lightness.*] What will you wager that you do?

MRS. OLIVER

Anything—a pair of gloves.

INGRAHAM

Done!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Defiantly.*] You're going to tell me that you find your boat won't accommodate as many guests as you had supposed, and that during the remainder of your trip, you must forego the pleasure of my society.

INGRAHAM

[*Spreading out his fingers.*] I only wear seven and a half, though you mightn't think it.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Surprised.*] Do you mean I've lost? You weren't going to say that—perhaps not, now—since I've said it for you.

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INGRAHAM

Oh, come, Mrs. Oliver, you don't think I'd shuffle about a bet.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Quickly.*] I beg your pardon. Well, what were you going to say to me?

INGRAHAM

[*Very gently.*] Instead of asking you to leave I was going to ask if you'd mind telling me how you happened to come?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Still defiant.*] Surely Mr. Packard explained that?

INGRAHAM

Yes, but, after all, he gave me his version, not yours.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Looking at him intently for a moment.*] That's very kind of you, very kind. [*Sits C.*]

INGRAHAM

Everyone has a right to be heard.

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Lifting her head with a dignity.*] You certainly have a right to an explanation. Most men would have demanded it when I came on board.

INGRAHAM

And made a scene? [*Shrugs.*] A man may commit murder, under provocation, but he may *not* make a scene.

MRS. OLIVER

I'd have gone away then if there'd been any way open. I—I—don't like forcing myself on people, Mr. Ingraham.

INGRAHAM

Oh, please, Mrs. Oliver, I saw the situation was as difficult for you as it was for me.

MRS. OLIVER

Mr. Packard made a dreadful blunder, I can't yet see how! He told me that he had the loan of a friend's yacht over the week-end, and that there'd be no one but ourselves! He couldn't have known that his wife . . .

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INGRAHAM

[*Hastily.*] No, no, of course not. He thought it was a—a different kind of a party altogether—a bachelor-party.

MRS. OLIVER

How horrible!

INGRAHAM

[*Distressed.*] Oh, why discuss what Packy may have thought?

MRS. OLIVER

Have I come to *that!* To be taken for the sort of woman who goes to bachelor-parties, rowdy, vulgar, champagne-drinking affairs?

INGRAHAM

Packy's an ass! I told him so, but—after all—

MRS. OLIVER

[*Looks up quickly.*] You think there's no difference between my coming with him alone and coming with him on a party, such as I've just described? [*Stopping him as he is about to answer.*] Mr. Ingraham, I lead my own life—I'm answerable to no one. I don't adhere to the

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established code of morals, but I have standards of my own. I haven't lost my self-respect. I lead a quiet, exclusive life. . . .

INGRAHAM

[*As frankly and simply as she.*] But you . . . er . . . do lead it? I wonder, without impertinence or curiosity, I wonder why?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Slowly.*] Don't think that I took it up deliberately, or that it's what I should most prefer. Do me the justice to believe that. I took the step which shaped my life when I was young, alone, impatient of obstacles. I wanted my share in the beauty and the happiness of the world. I thought I couldn't live in sordidness and loneliness, utterly without affection. I claim entire freedom in my way of living, but I do feel that the dignity with which I condition it, makes a sort of career for it. Of course the prudes and the moralists will never agree to this, but you . . . [*Looks at his face a moment and then drops her eyes.*] I see. . . . You're like the rest. You recognize no degrees in a life like mine. Once a woman steps outside the conventional pale she's black, black as the ace of spades.

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You're all the same, you men, you're all color blind. [*She walks a step or two away.*]

INGRAHAM

[*After a moment's pause, gently.*] You're wrong there, Mrs. Oliver. We're not color blind —some men have quite an eye for color. They know the difference between black and grey, for instance, perfectly. They even admire some shades of *pale* grey, [*bows kindly to her*] very much. But—they have decreed that white's the wear for their women folk, and white alone. You can't deceive the world about white. The least spot or stain shows on it—any one can see at a glance whether it's white or not. You may abuse men for selecting such a troublesome, expensive color, when there are so many serviceable, work-a-day shades that won't show spots or stains. Men have queer notions, perhaps, but they're *not* color blind. [*Hurrying on as* MRS. OLIVER *starts to speak.*] Do please understand me. I'm not sitting in judgment on you. After a sheltered, comfortable life, in which you hadn't even to think for yourself, you had to choose, somewhere, sometime, between hardship and luxury, between fending for yourself and—allowing

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some one else to fend for you. You made your choice.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Lifting her head.*] And I'm paying for it, Mr. Ingraham. Don't make any mistake about that. One pays for what one gets in this world. Of course—I don't complain—

INGRAHAM

No, you wouldn't. I can see that it's an odd sort of satisfaction to you that you do pay! You believe in a quid pro quo.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Dryly.*] It exists in most relationships in life whether you believe in it or not.

INGRAHAM

[*Thoughtfully.*] What you said about your self-respect is true. A woman of your caliber never goes the easy, greedy, down-hill way of the weakling. Whatever you do, you do well. You have the artist's instinct for perfection—[*Rising.*] and that's what makes you so dangerous.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Rising also.*] Mr. Ingraham!

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INGRAHAM

I'm worried about my brother-in-law. He and my sister have quarrelled, they'll make a mess of their happiness if somebody doesn't stand by and help them. I'm standing by. [*She starts to speak.*] I know you mean no harm. But Tom's a little off his head, and the society of—an artist in charm—[*She smiles rather sadly.*] I must seem an ungracious host.

MRS. OLIVER

To an uninvited guest?

INGRAHAM

[*Kindly.*] Sssh! We'll forget all that. Why, I've talked to you like an old friend; I trust you, and I trust Tom. There's a chance of him and Racie coming together again, and as long as there's a chance, I'll stand by.

MRS. OLIVER

And I'll help you. [*They shake hands.*] But frankly, Mr. Ingraham, your sister's just throwing her husband at the head of the first woman who looks at him.

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INGRAHAM

I don't know what gets into the married women. They act like spoiled children. No wonder they can't compete with a—a woman like you!

MRS. OLIVER

Oh, please, I'm not competing with them.

INGRAHAM

Perhaps not, but see how it works out. Mrs. Frost nags her husband and belittles him, you show him a little appreciation, and he's putty in your hands; Mrs. Packard neglects Packy for bridge, he invites you to spend week-ends with him; Racie sends Tom to Coventry on the top-floor, and is surprised that he doesn't want a return ticket. If she'd only meet him half-way!

MRS. OLIVER

I might give her a few object-lessons!

INGRAHAM

No! No! No! You promised!

MRS. OLIVER

And I'll keep my word. Where can you land me?

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INGRAHAM

If this fog holds off, we'll make New London before tomorrow morning.

MRS. OLIVER

And I'll go ashore early.

INGRAHAM

Having first received a telegram.

MRS. OLIVER

Of course. A telegram saying that Mr. Oliver is dangerously ill.

INGRAHAM

[*Quickly.*] Don't let him die, please! I'd rather you weren't left a widow at this juncture.

[MRS. FROST *enters suddenly from passage-way R., with an apron on, a saucepan in one hand, and an armful of mustard boxes.*]

INGRAHAM

[*As she drops two boxes.*] Allow me. [*Picks them up.*] What have you here?

MRS. FROST

Mustard. You said I might ask the cook for anything I wanted.

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INGRAHAM

By all means. . . . Is it . . . is it for a rarebit?

MRS. FROST

Rarebit! No! For Charlie! A plaster for his chest. Haven't you heard him coughing?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Surprised.*] I hadn't noticed it.

MRS. FROST

A dreadful hollow bark! He would stay on deck in this horrid fog! He'll be lucky if he doesn't have tonsilitis.

[*Glares at* MRS. OLIVER *and hurries into her stateroom, dropping another box as she shuts the door.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*As* INGRAHAM *returns to her.*] He'll be lucky if he doesn't have that mustard plaster. I think instead of having a telegram, *I'll* have tonsilitis.

INGRAHAM

No, nothing catching. We'd be quarantined. A sprained ankle would be simpler.

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MRS. OLIVER

The very thing! Your stairs were especially built for it.

INGRAHAM

But can you fall down them and sprain your ankle, without really spraining it?

MRS. OLIVER

Of course I can! I shan't really hurt myself, but you'll all think I have!

[*They speak almost in whispers, glancing at* MRS. FROST'S *door.*]

INGRAHAM

Then it won't do for you to go ashore.

MRS. OLIVER

On the contrary, I'll have to catch the first train to New York, to have it put in plaster.

INGRAHAM

Good! There's a train from New London at six.

MRS. OLIVER

Then I'll have a bad night and leave before the others are up.

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INGRAHAM

[*Courteously.*] You'll permit me to escort you?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Firmly, but with a grateful look.*] You must stay here to make the explanations. Jenks can put me on the train.

INGRAHAM

[*Looks at watch.*] Do you prefer to fall before or after dinner? There'll hardly be time before, will there?

MRS. OLIVER

Oh yes, the sooner, the better.

[*Starts up the steps.*]

INGRAHAM

I'll stand ready to pick you up, then.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Over her shoulder in a loud whisper.*] Don't! It would look as though we planned it.

[*She goes up.*]

INGRAHAM

Right! [PACKARD *and* FROST *enter from R.*]

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PACKY

I say, Inky, what's the matter with Tom? I met him on the deck just now and he glared at me and said I was no gentleman.

FROST

Said he was getting off at New London, and going back to New York.

INGRAHAM

We're a good way from New London yet—

[MRS. OLIVER, *uttering a little cry, falls from the top of the steps to the bottom and lands with one foot bent under her.*]

INGRAHAM AND PACKY

[*Together.*] Oh—ah!

FROST

[*Rushing to her.*] My dear Mrs. Oliver!

TOM

[*Running down steps.*] You're not hurt?

PACKY

By Jove, she's fainted!

[MRS. OLIVER'S *eyes are closed.*]

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INGRAHAM

[*Quickly approaching.*] Oh, I think not. It's only . .

MRS. OLIVER

[*Opening her eyes at the sound of his voice, and speaking faintly.*] Only a sprained ankle!

[*Tries to move her foot, and winces, giving a very real groan.*]

[INGRAHAM *beams.*]

TOM AND PACKY

We'll lift you! Now, all together.

[*They and* FROST *support* MRS. OLIVER *to seat C.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Entering from stateroom.*] [*Sternly.*] Charles! What is this?

FROST

Come and help Mrs. Oliver, Emily. She has fallen!

MRS. FROST

"Fallen"! Fallen downstairs, you mean?

[*Her face relaxes, she kneels down, saucepan in hand, as* RACIE *and* MRS. PACKARD

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come down the steps. MRS. OLIVER *hastily covers her ankles with her skirt.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Coming forward.*] What is it—a sprained ankle!

[*All the women come to the seat.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Quickly protecting her foot.*] Please don't touch it! I can't bear for you to touch it.

MRS. PACKARD

Nonsense! It must be bandaged. I'll bandage it. Bandages, Racie. Emily, take away that saucepan and fetch me some water. Clear out, you men! [*She rolls up her sleeves—competently.* RACIE *and* MRS. FROST *exeunt to the stateroom.* TOM *and* FROST *go up steps arguing "She ought to step on it,"—"She oughtn't to step on it."* MRS. PACKARD *goes up stage and gets towels from her stateroom.*] The bandages should be damp.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Desperately, aside to* INGRAHAM.] I can't have it bandaged! Help me to my stateroom!

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[*She struggles up, puts her foot to the floor and nearly faints. To* INGRAHAM.] Some sherry, quick!

INGRAHAM

[*Speaks at sideboard.*] What an actress you are! You almost fooled me!

[*She snatches the opportunity, while he is pouring out the sherry, to pull off her stocking, and as he brings her the sherry, the women re-enter.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Bustling back with her sleeves rolled up, followed by* MRS. FROST *and* RACIE *with damp bandages.*] Now, Mr. Ingraham, we shan't need you! [*Kneeling down by* MRS. OLIVER *as* INGRAHAM *exits with glass.*] Stocking already off? [*Examines the ankle.*] Good! It hasn't had time to swell yet! [*Begins bandaging.*] I'm afraid this means no rubber tonight, but we can play all day tomorrow. You must give me my revenge!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Wincing.*] You're getting—your revenge—now—by being—so good to me!

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MRS. PACKARD

Good? When I'm hurting you like the deuce. There! That's as tight as I can make it. Will you see if you can step on it?

[*As* MRS. OLIVER *rises, and lowers her bandaged foot to the floor,* MRS. PACKARD *picks up the empty stocking and runs her arm and hand mechanically into it to turn it.*]

Here's your stock—

[*She glances at it, stops abruptly.* MRS. OLIVER *looks back at* MRS. PACKARD, *sees the stocking too, and gives a sharp cry.*]

MRS. OLIVER

Oh!

RACIE

[*Springing forward.*] Lean on me!

[MRS. FROST *also comes forward, and* MRS. OLIVER, *stumbling between her and* RACIE, *gains her own door.* MRS. PACKARD *remains kneeling, staring at the stocking on her arm, and taking the other stocking from her pocket, compares the two.*]

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Faintly.*] Thank you—thank you all! I'll be—better alone—now!

[*She vanishes inside the door, leaving* RACIE *and* MRS. FROST *outside. Surprised, they turn to* MRS. PACKARD, *who rises and holds out the stockings on her extended arms.*]

MRS. PACKARD

Girls! Do you see *this?*

MRS. FROST

Mrs. Oliver's stocking?

MRS. PACKARD

Mrs. Oliver's stockings! And Mrs. Oliver's *suit-case*, too! Oh! She's been making nice fools of us—laughing at us in her sleeve—she and our husbands—

RACIE

What? What!

MRS. FROST

Our husbands!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Rising to her feet.*] Yes! If it was Packy who brought her here, I notice Charlie and Tom

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haven't allowed him to spend much time in her society!

RACIE AND MRS. FROST

No, they haven't. You're right! They haven't.

[TOM *and* FROST *run down, followed by* PACKY, *to find* MRS. PACKARD, RACIE, *and* MRS. FROST *facing them with blazing eyes.*]

TOM

[*Hurrying to* RACIE.] What is the matter?

RACIE

[*Shrinking back.*] Oh, Tom, I trusted you!

MRS. FROST

[*Sternly.*] Charles! I suspected you!

MRS. PACKARD

[*To* PACKY, *who remains transfixed, open-mouthed, gazing at the suit-case.*] I'm glad you have the grace not to open your mouth! [*He shuts it.*] These stockings— [*She flourishes her arms.*] You see these stockings—

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PACKY

[*Stammering.*] I see—see them for the first time, Carrie, I swear!

MRS. PACKARD

That's not your fault, I'll wager! Anyway, you all saw 'em just now when that woman pretended to sprain her ankle—

FROST

"That woman"!

TOM

"Pretended"!

MRS. PACKARD

Yes, pretended! Oh, this isn't the first time she's fallen, the clever creature! Such a bridge-player, too! She made a fool of me, but not for long. [*Throws the stockings down and, turning, sees* INGRAHAM, *who comes down and stands surveying the scene.*] Mr. Ingraham, I must ask you to stop when you reach New London, and let me off there. My connection with this cruise is at an end. [*Sails to her stateroom door.*]

MRS. FROST

[*Same.*] And mine!

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RACIE

[*Same, sobbing.*] And m-m-ine!

[*As the three women disappear, each in her own room, all three doors are slammed in quick succession, and in the silence, while the men stand speechless, staring at each other, three bolts are heard to shoot.*]

TOM AND INGRAHAM

[*Savagely to* PACKY.] Now you've done it!

FROST

[*Bewildered.*] What's Packy done?

INGRAHAM

[*Shouts at him.*] You poor innocent! Don't you know *yet?*

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

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ACT III

TIME: *Before sunrise, the following morning.*

SCENE: *The saloon of The Bachelor below, and the deck, above. In the saloon, which is deserted, a single electric light is burning. Outside the closed doors of the three staterooms, three loaded dinner-trays stand, untouched. Above, the light begins to show in the east, deepens into rose-color and sunrise during the ensuing scene.*

FROST *and* TOM *and* PACKARD *are huddled uncomfortably under steamer-rugs, in steamer-chairs, stretched along the front of the deck,* INGRAHAM *is doubled up on the skylight seat. All are dozing, rousing at intervals to fight the mosquitoes.*

After a moment, FROST *rises stealthily from his chair, and taking great care not to rouse the others, tiptoes along the deck toward the companionway. He reappears down in the cabin,*

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slips, recovers himself, tiptoes to the middle door, listens, steps accidentally in the tray, jumps back, then taps on the panel of the door. Silence.

FROST

[*Putting his mouth to the keyhole and speaking in a piercing whisper.*] Emily! Emily, I say! It's I—Charlie. [*Pause.*] Emily, I insist on your opening the door! [*Louder.*] This is ridiculous! I want some more clothes. I am cold! You are entirely mistaken about my conduct, which was blameless! [*Sneezes.*] Open the door. [*Sneezes again.*] You won't? [*Silence.*] Very well!

[*Withdraws with great dignity, giving a couple of hollow coughs as he goes up steps, and stopping to watch the door after each cough. As he disappears, the electric bell from* MRS. OLIVER'S *stateroom rings.* JENKS *appears almost immediately from passage-way R., drawing on his jacket as he comes. He seems very gloomy, and regards with intense disapproval the tray outside* RACIE'S *door before tapping at* MRS. OLIVER'S. *The door opens slightly.*]

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JENKS

You rang, ma'am?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Opening door wider and disclosing herself in negligée and lace cap.*] Yes, Jenks! Where are we now?

JENKS

Anchored off New London, ma'am. It's close on four o'clock.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Handing him a note.*] Will you give this to Mr. Ingraham, Jenks, as soon as he wakes?

JENKS

[*Glumly.*] He's awake now, ma'am. I don't think he's ever been asleep. None of the gentlemen has, ma'am! The mosquitoes are somethin' awful!

MRS. OLIVER

I hadn't noticed them.

JENKS

Not down here, p'raps—but on deck—!

MRS. OLIVER

On deck?

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JENKS

[*Gloomily.*] They're all sleepin' on deck, the men are. They ain't got no other place to sleep. [*Glowers at the closed doors.*] You won't have some coffee or anything, ma'am?

MRS. OLIVER

Nothing, thank you, Jenks. [*Closes door.*]

[JENKS, *shaking his fist at the closed doors, exits R., as* FROST *comes creeping along the upper deck, and, with infinite precautions to reach his chair unnoticed, trips over the foot of* TOM'S *chair and falls over* TOM.]

TOM

[*Rousing up and hitting out violently.*] Oh, hang these blasted mosquitoes! Don't they ever *sleep?*

[FROST *crawls quickly under his rug and pretends to be sleeping soundly. Eight bells are struck.*]

VOICE OF THE WATCH

[*From the forward deck.*] "Eight bells and all's well."

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PACKY

"Well"? Hell! I haven't slept a wink. [*Sits up suddenly.*] Who could, in *that* thing? [*Bangs foot of steamer-chair down and rises.*]

FROST

[*Pretending to rouse from slumber.*] I say, you fellows! How can I sleep if you throw things?

PACKY

[*Sitting on skylight seat, and lighting a cigar.*] Who's throwin' things?

INGRAHAM

[*Crossing over.*] Here, Packy, take the bench! I thought I saw *you* prowling about, Frost. Been down to parley with the enemy?

PACKY

Meanin' our wives?

FROST

[*Indignantly.*] How can you suggest such a thing. It would be *most* undignified! Besides, they're asleep!

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PACKY

[*Resentfully, killing a mosquito.*] Ho! They can sleep! Look at us!

TOM

[*Exploding.*] *You* don't deserve to sleep! Getting us all into a mess like this!

PACKY

That's right! You jump on me, too! You're as bad as the women were last night!

[*He strolls off toward the rail, smoking.*]

FROST

[*Pensively.*] I never was so surprised! How anybody could object to the presence on board of a lady like Mrs. Oliver . . .

TOM

[*Interrupts.*] Oh, come, Charlie, you couldn't call her *that* exactly—

FROST

[*Hotly.*] But I do. I'll swear that, however she happened to come, she is a lady, and a thoroughbred!

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INGRAHAM

[*Pleased.*] Right, Charlie! You're a thoroughbred yourself, when it comes to "thinking no evil"!

FROST

[*Embarrassed.*] You—you never can tell! Suppose a—a—a man tries to kill his mother-in-law,—how do you know she didn't try to kill him first?

TOM

[*Bitterly.*] It's a pity our wives aren't more like Charlie. *They* seemed very ready to think the worst of us, without giving us a chance to explain.

FROST

But we haven't anything to explain!

TOM

[*Same.*] Why can't they find that out before they rush off and bolt themselves in?

PACKY

[*Coming down.*] Yes! It's hard to be unjustly blamed, when one is innocent. Queer, too. Just the one time when I hadn't—

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INGRAHAM

Oh, shut up, Packy! Being unjustly blamed is a novelty for you!

TOM

It's beastly unfair, just the same, and I won't stand for it! [*Rises.*] Any woman that bolts doors on her husband needn't think she'll find him on the mat the next morning! Let's cut out the rest of the trip and take the six o'clock express back to town!

[INGRAHAM *disturbed.*]

PACKY

By Jove! That's a good idea!

FROST

[*Rising majestically and imitating* MRS. PACKARD.] "Mr. Ingraham, I must ask you to let me off at New London—my connection with this cruise is at an end."

PACKY

[*Eagerly.*] And Inky can explain to the ladies after we're gone!

INGRAHAM

Oh! I'm to explain to a row of closed doors,

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am I?—while you skip off to town, you miserable bunch of quitters, you!

PACKY

Don't get peeved, Inky! After all, it was you who started all this in the first place—

INGRAHAM

I started it?

PACKY

With your telegrams—

TOM

And your telephone messages—

FROST

And your theories about "Zurich in the olden time"!

PACKY

[*To Ingraham.*] We all know how you love to play the diplomat! Like most *un*married people, you think you're hell-on-wheels when it comes to giving married people advice—

INGRAHAM

Don't talk to me about married people! Of all the ungrateful serpents on this earth, married peo-

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ple are the worst! If ever I try to meddle in their affairs again, may I be everlastingly—

FROST

[*Mildly.*] Blessed are the peace-makers, Inky!

INGRAHAM

[*Bitterly.*] I'm a great little peace-maker! Look at this boat! [*Waves his hand round.*] And this was a pleasure-trip!

TOM

Since when was this a *pleasure*-trip?

INGRAHAM

Not since *you* came on board, Tom!

PACKY

[*Groans.*] Not since I heard Carrie's voice down in the cabin.

FROST

A pleasure trip—with Emily? It can't be done.

PACKY

Where do you keep that old brandy, Inky?

INGRAHAM

In the sideboard locker. [*Hands key.*]

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[PACKY *exits Left,* FROST *and* TOM *Right, as* JENKS *comes on L. with the note, which he hands to* INGRAHAM.]

INGRAHAM

[*Reading note.*] Jenks, Mrs. Oliver wishes to go ashore in time for the six o'clock train. Have the launch manned and at the side in half an hour. I wish you to go with Mrs. Oliver to the train, and see yourself that she is made thoroughly comfortable.

JENKS

All right, sir. An' if anybody else wants to go, sir?

INGRAHAM

Say that the launch will make a second trip, and, Jenks—[*meaningly*] keep the launch ashore till the last train for New York has left. You understand?

JENKS

[*Grins and winks.*] Aye, aye, sir!

[*They exeunt together R. as* PACKY *enters cabin from R. below, and after looking all about the cabin, tiptoes to* MRS. FROST'S *stateroom door and applies himself to the keyhole.*]

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PACKY

[*Cautiously.*] I—I say, old girl! I say, Carrie! Drop it, won't you? This is all rot! I swear to you that I'm entirely innocent *this* time! And I'm going to turn over a new leaf. [*Changing suddenly from one foot to another, as a mosquito bites his ankle.*] Damn it!— No, I didn't mean that! [*Cajolingly.*] Can you hear me, old girl? [*Straightens up, sees the card on the door.*] Oh Lord, Mrs. Frost! I beg your pardon! My mistake!

[*Moves backwards and stumbles into* RACIE'S *tray, with a clatter.*]

TOM

[*Running down the steps and finding* PACKY *trying to rise, clinging to the handle of* RACIE'S *door.*] What are you doing there, Packy? That's not your stateroom!

PACKY

[*Desperately.*] I don't seem to be able to find mine!

TOM

[*Helping him up.*] You've had too much brandy!

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PACKY

I haven't had any yet! [*Looking ruefully at the tray.*] I'm afraid I've spoilt Mrs. Updegraff's dinner.

TOM

[*Inspecting tray.*] She hadn't touched it!

[*As* PACKY *goes down to the sideboard and takes the brandy from the locker,* TOM *draws a card from his pocket, scribbles a couple of lines on it, and watching till* PACKY'S *back is turned, slips it under* RACIE'S *door.*]

PACKY

[*At sideboard, pouring out brandy.*] Have some?

TOM

No, thanks. [*Goes R. and exits.*]

[*As* PACKY *is about to drink off a glass of brandy the handle of* MRS. FROST'S *door turns, the door opens very slightly and her arm is thrust out.* PACKY *sets down the brandy and exits noisily, Right. The arm comes further out and claws a dish off the tray in front of the door, with a*

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rattle of china. MRS. PACKARD'S *door now opens and a listening head is thrust out—it opens a little wider, and* MRS. PACKARD *is visible wearing a practical-looking wadded bath-robe. She and* MRS. FROST, *who wears a blue flannel wrapper, and has her hair in curl papers, lean from their doors to each other.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Listening.*] What was that?

MRS. FROST

[*With a saucer of coffee-jelly in her hand of which she partakes ravenously.*] Only me, Carrie. Aren't you nearly starved?

[*Comes down C.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Coming down.*] No, I couldn't eat. I'm being eaten! [*Kills a mosquito.*] Where are the men?

MRS. FROST

Somewhere on deck. I thought I heard Charlie cough. [*In a whisper, taking* MRS. PACKARD'S *elbow.*] Carrie, where is *she?*

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Pointing to stateroom L.*] In there. She couldn't very well leave before daylight.

MRS. FROST

Do you think she heard what you said, last night?

MRS. PACKARD

Unless the woman's stone deaf, Emily, she heard! I hope she did!

[RACIE'S *door opens, and* RACIE, *in a bewitching pink negligée and cap, but with a very troubled face, looks cautiously out.*]

MRS. FROST

[*In penetrating tones.*] S-s-s-h-h-h! There she is now.

MRS. PACKARD

No, it's Racie!

RACIE

[*Stealing out.*] Where are we?

[*Sees card under her door and picks it up surreptitiously.*]

MRS. PACKARD

Anchored off New London, I think. Isn't that the Beacon?

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[*As she and* MRS. FROST *exeunt to spy thro' the port-hole,* RACIE *comes down to C. seat and reads her note unobserved.*]

RACIE

"This is the second time you've bolted a door on me. There won't *be* any third time. I'm off! Tom." [*Repeats.*] "There won't *be* any third time"! [*She crumples the note and looks around in terror.*] Oh, what shall I do! Inky told me not to raise barriers! What shall I do?

[MRS. FROST *and* MRS. PACKARD *reappear.* MRS. FROST *takes another dish off her tray and comes down, eating.* MRS. PACKARD *comes down C.*]

MRS. PACKARD

As soon as it's day-light we can get the sailors to row us ashore.

RACIE

[*Begins to cry.*] Oh, I'm so miserable!

MRS. FROST

[*Taking another dish from tray and coming to* RACIE, *her face beaming with delight.*] You poor dear child! What is it?

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MRS. PACKARD

Nonsense! I don't see what you've got to be miserable about. If you'd been made a fool of like me—

RACIE

I've made a fool of myself! What shall I do?

MRS. PACKARD

That's easy enough. The first thing is to get home.

MRS. FROST

Go home and leave Charlie on the boat with that woman?

MRS. PACKARD

Don't be a goose, Emily. She won't stay after we go! This boat's the safest place you could leave Charlie, now.

RACIE

[*Anxiously.*] But after you get home, Carrie?

MRS. PACKARD

That's not so easy. I've written a letter to my lawyers—

RACIE

[*In a suppressed shriek.*] Carrie!

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MRS. FROST

[*Delighted.*] Stop! Carrie! I can't listen to another word! Go *on!*

MRS. PACKARD

[*After a moment's silence.*] I've done a lot of thinking between fighting mosquitoes, and I've come to the conclusion that there's no use side-stepping facts. Packy and I've been as good as divorced this long time—

MRS. FROST

[*Severely.*] As *bad* as divorced, you mean, Carrie!

MRS. PACKARD

And I've realized I'm not the woman to hold such a man as Packy. [*Laughs grimly.*] My mirror and this morning light did something to convince me of that. I wonder what face-wash that woman uses? . . . If I were to try another kind of corset . . . I've been letting go of myself, lately. I wonder if I were to try that face massage . . . but those things take so much time! And after all, why should I try to keep Packy hitched up, if he wants to break away?

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MRS. FROST

[*Tartly.*] Why? Because it's good for him!

[*She is again gobbling the contents of the saucer.*]

MRS. PACKARD

Have you found much satisfaction in being good for your husband, Emily?

MRS. FROST

[*Eating.*] I've had the comfort of knowing I've done my duty by him!

MRS. PACKARD

But has *he* had much comfort out of it, do you think?

MRS. FROST

[*At her door, depositing dish on tray.*] I never thought of that!

MRS. PACKARD

Well, give it a thought now and then! Come on, Racie dear, we'd better dress.

[MRS. FROST *exits into her stateroom.* RACIE *intercepts* MRS. PACKARD.]

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RACIE

[*Timidly.*] Carrie! I don't believe face-wash and massage are so important, though they help. Perhaps if you and Packy cared more about the same things—

MRS. PACKARD

[*Cynically.*] Same things? Packy's never cared for anything but motors and women.

RACIE

Perhaps if you'd cared more for motors he'd have cared less for women. If Tom cared for motors I'd be willing to eat and sleep in them if that would make him spend his spare time with me and not with men.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Entering her stateroom.*] You can be thankful it's with men.

RACIE

I can't be thankful for anything now!

[*Sits forlornly down on centre seat and begins to cry quietly among the cushions. The handle of* MRS. OLIVER'S *door turns noiselessly and* MRS. OLIVER *comes softly out. She is dressed to go ashore, in hat,*

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veil and ulster, and walks with a slight limp, but crosses the stage swiftly, and without seeing RACIE *among the cushions. She has ascended the first step of the companionway, when a muffled sob reaches her ear; she turns quickly and sees* RACIE. *She pauses for a moment, ascends another step as if to hurry away unseen, then pauses again, and turning quickly, descends the steps and comes down C.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Touching* RACIE's *arm.*] Mrs. Updegraff! Why are you crying?

RACIE

[*Raises her head, indignant when she sees who it is.*] Oh, it's you! I'm *not* crying.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Indulgently.*] Oh, oh?—you're not crying! Then why are you—*not* crying?

RACIE

[*Rising and trying to pass.*] Excuse me! I can't possibly tell you anything!

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Impatiently, and detaining her.*] Oh! Leave me out of the question. It's you who matter. Listen to me! If you've made a blunder—

RACIE

Oh, if we talk of blunders—

MRS. OLIVER

I tell you, leave me out! Supposing I have blundered, is that any reason why I should see you making a muddle of your life—you who have everything—youth, beauty, love—will you kindly tell me why you are crying?

RACIE

[*Suddenly breaking down.*] Marriage is so difficult!

MRS. OLIVER

"Difficult"! If ever there was a marriage on velvet it's yours—and you've no excuse for not making it the greatest success in the world!

RACIE

[*Forgetting herself.*] But how? How?

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MRS. OLIVER

[*Sitting down beside her.*] I can tell you how *not.* Don't make mountains out of molehills.

RACIE

You don't call one's wedding anniversary a "*molehill*"?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Smiling.*] It's not so important as the thing it stands for, is it? [*Brushes* RACIE's *hair out of her eyes.*] So long as your husband doesn't forget that he is married to you, so long as he shows you every day of his life that he hasn't forgotten what that wedding stood for—what do you care about the date? [*Turns a little away from* RACIE *and speaks rapidly.*] I once heard of a man whose wife *did* care about dates. He wired to a little friend with whom he had made a week-end engagement in Paris: "For Heaven's sake change date. Forgot domestic anniversary. *Quite* free next week." And he was!

RACIE

[*Slowly.*] Free to go to Paris with—another woman?

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MRS. OLIVER

It's the husband who carefully observes domestic anniversaries, however they bore him, who is always "quite free next week!"

RACIE

[*Same.*] If I thought my husband could ever do that!

MRS. OLIVER

It's all in your own hands! Ah, my dear . . . [*With emotion.*] If I were starting out in life with a strong, clean, spirited fellow like that—my husband wouldn't know there was another woman but me in the world!

[RACIE, *moved, is about to speak, when* MRS. FROST *and* MRS. PACKARD *enter from their respective staterooms, in hats and coats. They meet each other, and come down.*]

MRS. FROST

Carrie! Carrie! I think it would be much safer if we let her go first! I don't like leaving Charlie on the boat with that woman!

[*Sees* RACIE *and* MRS. OLIVER *and breaks off abruptly.* MRS. OLIVER *rises swiftly, then wavers, her face showing great pain.*]

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RACIE

[*Springing to steady her.*] Oh, your ankle is paining you! You *did* sprain it, didn't you?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Nodding.*] Yes!

MRS. PACKARD

You're not going to believe that, are you, Racie?

MRS. FROST

[*Crosses to table.*] Come away! Can't you see it's a part of her game?

RACIE

[*Indignantly.*] How can you, Emily? Mrs. Oliver hasn't any game!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Crossing also.*] Oh, hasn't she? Anything that a woman undertakes to do is her game. Some of them don't succeed very well.

[*They both sit.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Recovering from the pain, rises and faces* MRS. PACKARD.] You're quite right, Mrs. Packard.

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Some of them don't succeed at all! What about yours—the marriage game—how do *you* succeed in that?

MRS. PACKARD

Our game?

MRS. OLIVER

[*With spirit.*] You married women undertake to please one man, and you don't even do that!

MRS. FROST

Silence!

MRS. OLIVER

Well, do you? I've watched you, and I can't understand what you're about! You're in clover, all of you, and you don't know it! You aren't in earnest, any of you! You hold "no-trump" hands, and you just make it "spades"!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Roused.*] Oh, come, Mrs. Oliver! I draw the line there!

MRS. OLIVER

You're too good a bridge-player, Mrs. Packard, not to know that you can't win at any game except by playing it to win! Look how a man

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slaves over his business—he doesn't hope to succeed unless he puts his whole heart into it! Why don't any of you work as hard to make marriage a success? Why don't you, once you're in it, feel that you've got to make good? And why don't you, if you fail, feel the same humiliation that a man does at bankruptcy? After all, it's your job! And yet most women behave, when they marry, as tho' they'd finished a job, not begun it! They look on their husbands as cinched, and regard any effort on their part to hold them as "most undignified." Imagine a man entering a business, and feeling it beneath him to make any effort to hold that business!

MRS. FROST

Oh, but in business the competition is so great!

[MRS. OLIVER *casts up her eyes.*]

MRS. PACKARD

[*Cynically.*] Yes, Emily, and is there no competition in marriage?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Earnestly.*] None that a wife need fear, if she plays her game and the other woman's too. There's an incident in the life of Disraeli that

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always touched me very much. On the night of one of his most famous parliamentary triumphs Disraeli walked home to tell his wife. The report had preceded him; she greeted him with joy, and escorted him in to supper. There at his place was a favorite dish which the doctors had forbidden him to eat—an unusually large bunch of his favorite flowers—choice and rare wines. Other subtle and charming attentions marked the progress of the meal. After a while, Disraeli rose, crossed over to his wife and kissed her with the words: "You are more like a mistress than a wife"! Mrs. Disraeli thought that was the highest compliment she ever received!

MRS. FROST

I think Mr. Disraeli used most improper language!

RACIE

[*Impulsively.*] It's a beautiful story, and I don't wonder Mrs. Disraeli was proud of it! If we studied our husbands as she did—

MRS. OLIVER

[*Softly.*] There'd be no competition, Mrs. Packard. [*Goes up Left.*]

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Suddenly, aside to* MRS. FROST.] She's right!

MRS. FROST

Nonsense, Carrie! How can such a woman be right! You wouldn't hold up *her* example—would you?

MRS. PACKARD

No—not her example, but her method. Her technique is wonderful! I've been a fool. Here's where I tip over the bridge table and start in to recapture Packy! [*Rises.*] I've made it too easy for him to replace me, if stockings will do it! [*About to exit R.*]

MRS. FROST

Don't be coarse, Carrie! [*About to follow her —turns suddenly on* MRS. OLIVER.] And the men? Isn't it their fault if marriage doesn't succeed?—the drunkards, the rascals, the—the brutes?

MRS. OLIVER

I'm not talking about the kind of husband from whom a wife must protect herself. I'm talking of the typical, kindly American husband, who

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works hard, and whose wife has only to keep him and herself happy, while he is doing it. It seems so easy! So easy! And you don't do it. Nine women out of ten don't do it! Why, I could take on any one of your jobs, and make a howling success of it! [*Looks round at each in turn.*] Yours, or yours, or yours! Don't be frightened! [*As* MRS. FROST *gives a squawk of "Charlie!" and disappears Right.* MRS. PACKARD, *after a moment, follows her.*] I'm not going to! They don't interest me much, except yours— [*Her voice drops to gentleness and she comes to* RACIE.] Never mind the others! They may do something towards a better adjustment, they'll never get back that first freshness which only the youth of passion knows—the glory and the dream! You have it still—don't kill it! It's the most wonderful thing in the world. Don't smother it under the trappings of life. Carry it naked and unashamed! Ride, like Lady Godiva, through the market-place. Men's eyes will fall before you, and they will kneel in prayer.

[MRS. OLIVER *gives* RACIE *her hand which* RACIE *presses, too much moved for speech, and turning away, re-enters her stateroom as* MRS. PACKARD *re-enters R.*]

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MRS. PACKARD

[*Hastily.*] Mrs. Oliver, I must apologize to you! I nearly forgot to settle my bridge debt.

MRS. OLIVER

Oh, please, Mrs. Packard—

MRS. PACKARD

I've a shocking bad memory, but I never forget a debt.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Distressed.*] But I haven't given you your revenge.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Looking her between the eyes.*] I don't want any revenge—the account between us is closed.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Turning away.*] Thank you, but I couldn't—

MRS. PACKARD

[*Detaining her.*] Mrs. Oliver, you and I played bridge together in perfect good faith. Nothing which happened before or since then can have any effect on the fact that I owe you forty

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dollars. If I'd won, wouldn't you have settled with me?

MRS. OLIVER

[*Honestly.*] Yes, I should, Mrs. Packard.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Triumphantly.*] You see! [*A pause while she fumbles in her purse and finds only some silver and a twenty-dollar bill.*] How stupid of me!

MRS. OLIVER

Oh! one never carries money around!

MRS. PACKARD

I'll send you a check—I have your address.

MRS. OLIVER

[*Gently, after a moment's pause.*] That wasn't my address, Mrs. Packard. I'll send you my address.

MRS. PACKARD

You never will! [*Looks round in acute distress.*] I know! [*Unclasping the string of pearls from her neck.*] Take these!

MRS. OLIVER

[*Horrified.*] My dear Mrs. Packard!

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MRS. PACKARD

No, listen! They're not genuine—they're only an imitation, tho' it's an awfully clever one, isn't it? [*Holds them up.*] But they're worth forty dollars—I'm sure of that? And if you'd be so very kind as to accept them, I'll be eternally obliged to you! [*Puts them into* MRS. OLIVER'S *hands with the air of a woman who will take no refusal.*] There, that's settled! Good-bye!

[*About to exit.*]

MRS. OLIVER

[*Who has been looking closely at the pearls, raises her head.*] Wait, Mrs. Packard! I can't do this!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Turning.*] But why not?

MRS. OLIVER

Because these pearls are real.

MRS. PACKARD

I said they were a good imitation—

MRS. OLIVER

[*Interrupting her.*] Entirely too good. They are genuine.

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MRS. PACKARD

But I tell you—

MRS. OLIVER

[*Detaching her own string and laying them beside* MRS. PACKARD'S.] Look at them beside these!

MRS. PACKARD

[*Looks.*] There's a difference in imitations, of course, but you must allow me to know my own string. Why, Packy knows, too! He changed them for me. [*Pulls herself up short.*]

MRS. OLIVER

Mrs. Packard, I'm going to tell you something I overheard quite accidentally—your husband never changed those pearls. He only allowed you to think so.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Bridling.*] But that's impossible!

MRS. OLIVER

He made you a present of them, twice over. So you see, you can't part with them. [*Returns them to* MRS. PACKARD.] They are—the real thing. [*Clasps on her own as she turns away.*] Mine are the imitation.

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MRS. PACKARD

So Packy never— [*Stops, moved, looks at the pearls.*] Good old Packy! [*Turns away, then comes back to* MRS. OLIVER *and holds out her hand.*] Thank you! [*They shake hands.*] I'm more in your debt than ever!

MRS. OLIVER

[*With quick courtesy.*] Could you spare me your cigarette-case? I said I didn't smoke, but I do, and I'll keep it to remember you by.

MRS. PACKARD

[*Earnestly.*] Do! [*Presses the case into* MRS. OLIVER'S *hand and hurries R, pausing at door.*] I shan't forget you, either, Mrs. Oliver. You—you're wonderful!

[*Exits R. While they are talking,* INGRAHAM *has come down the companion-way. He removes his cap, and approaches* MRS. OLIVER.]

INGRAHAM

You're the most wonderful woman in the world. You've come among us all and taught us the gospel of marriage. You've made even me see that it's the only thing worth while.

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MRS. OLIVER

It's the outsiders who sometimes see clearest!

INGRAHAM

Queer, isn't it, that so many people should look down on marriage, sneer at it, and think that more pleasure is to be found in irregularities! Yet, whenever a man finds a woman he really loves, he wishes to make her his wife. The other relationship may do for a passing emotion, a gratified vanity, but the real thing—there's nothing good enough for the real thing but marriage!

MRS. OLIVER

And there's nothing good enough for marriage but the real thing. Remember, "white's the only wear"— [*She starts up the steps and winces.*]

INGRAHAM

You're in pain! [*Remembers, laughs.*] I forgot! You're such a good actress you make me feel as tho' you really had hurt yourself!

MRS. OLIVER

A good actress would never show it if she had! There's the launch! No! [*As he starts to fol-*

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low her.] I'd rather go alone, please! Good-bye.

[*Gives him her hand which he shakes warmly.*]

INGRAHAM

Good-bye, Mrs. Oliver!

[*He stands looking after her, and as she disappears he raises his hand to his uncovered head and salutes.*]

[*She disappears up the steps,* INGRAHAM *gazing after her. A few moments later she crosses the deck, pauses, and exits over the side. Enter* TOM *R.*]

TOM

Inky, the others are all going ashore. They're planning a motor-trip to Harvard for Charlie's reunion—

RACIE

[*Entering from stateroom.*] Tom!

TOM

Racie dear, we've both been idiots. Let 'em all go, and we'll have another honeymoon cruise!

[*Embrace.*]

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INGRAHAM

[*Taking the clipping from pocket and reading from it.*] "In Zurich, in the olden time" . . .

CURTAIN

END OF PLAY

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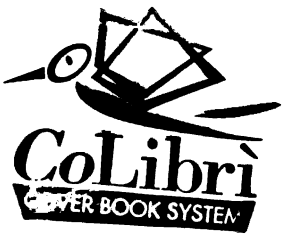

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